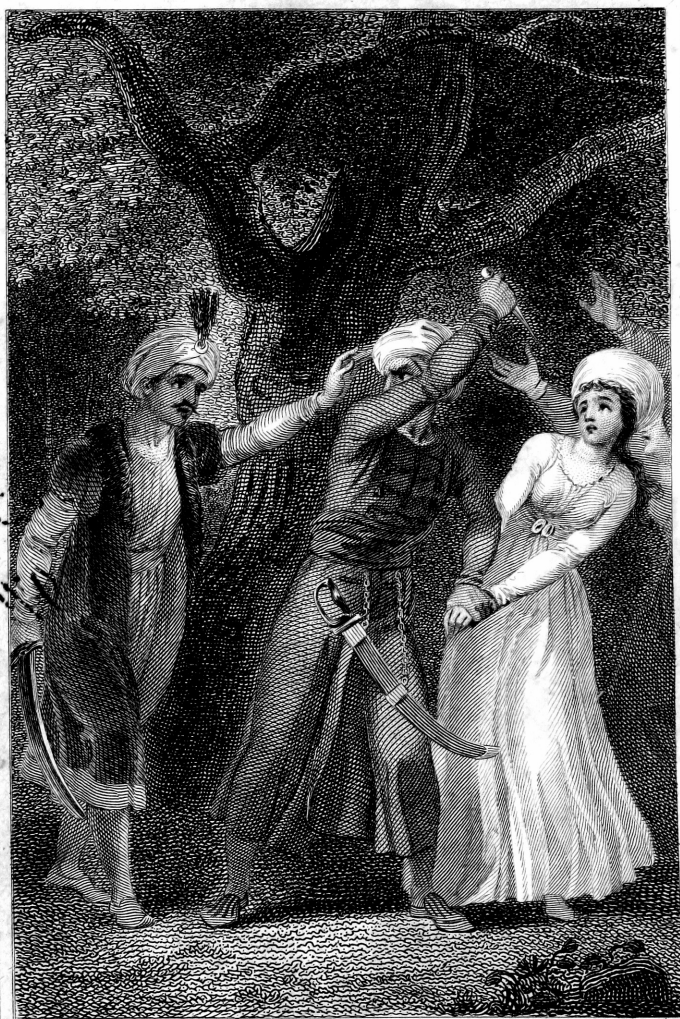


FRONTISPIECE, VOL. III.



T. Stothard del.

A. Smith sculp.

Zep. Forbear, or by this Hand Zenobia dies.

Zenobia. Act III. Sc. III.

Published June 4. 1800. by Cadell & Davies, Strand

DRAMAS
AND
OTHER POEMS;
OF THE
ABBE PIETRO METASTASIO.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

BY
JOHN HOOLE.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR OTRIDGE AND SON; R. FAULDER; J. CUTHELL; J. NUNN; J. WALKER; R. LEA; OGILVY AND SON; LACKINGTON, ALLEN, AND CO.; CADELL AND DAVIES; LONGMAN AND REES; W. J. AND J. RICHARDSON; AND VERNOR AND HOOD.

M DCCC.

[*H. Baldwin and Son, Printers, New Bridge-street.*]

CONTENTS

OF

THE THIRD VOLUME.

	PAGE
ZENOBIA.....	1
THEMISTOCLES.....	73
SIROËS.....	153
REGULUS.....	239
ROMULUS AND HERSILIA.....	311
THE DISCOVERY OF JOSEPH: A SACRED DRAMA.....	369

CANTATAS.

FISHING... ..	401
THE DREAM.....	403
THE NAME.....	406
SPRING.....	408
THE RETURN.....	411
FIRST LOVE.....	414
TIMID LOVE.....	416
THE NEST OF LOVES.....	418

ERRATA.

- p. 46. line 16, read,
 " And dost thou still, inhuman, live ? Still breath ?"
- p. 136. line 10, for " Persia " read " Egypt."
- p. 160. line 11, for " thus " read " that."
- p. 170. last line, read " Are steadier," &c.
- p. 231. last line but one, read " *Arax*. All Selucia yields."
- p. 350. line last, read " to gain him."
- p. 387. line 8, read " would fix," &c.
- p. 388. line 19, dele " on."
- p. 409. line 16, for " conquests " read " conquest."

Z E N O B I A.

VOL. III.

PERSONS

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ZENOBIÀ, Princess of ARMENIA, wife to RHADAMISTUS.

RHADAMISTUS, Prince of IBERIA.

TIRIDATES, a PARTHIAN Prince, in love with ZENOBIÀ.

ÆGLE, a shepherdess.

ZOPYRUS, a false Friend to RHADAMISTUS, in love with ZENOBIÀ.

MITHRANES, Confidant to TIRIDATES.

Followers of ZOPYRUS.

Soldiers of TIRIDATES.

SCENE near ARTAXATA, the capital of ARMENIA.

Z E N O B I A.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

A deep stony valley, surrounded by rocks and shaded with thick trees.

RHADAMISTUS *asleep upon a rock*, ZOPYRUS *observing him with attention.*

Zop. O! no, I am not deceiv'd, 'tis Rhadamistus:
How favouring stars have answer'd to my wishes!
I have long pursued his steps; and chance has now
Expos'd him to my arm, immers'd in sleep,
Alone in this sequester'd part. Neglect not
The gift that Fortune offers—Let him die:
This even his father bids; he hates in him
The rival of his throne, and I, in him,
The rival of my love—Then let me serve
My vengeance and my king.

[about to draw his sword.]

Rhad. *[dreaming.]* Leave me in peace.

Zop. He wakes! malicious fate!—We must
dissemble.

Rhad. Leave me in peace, O! ever honour'd
shade!

[waking.]

Zop. Almighty powers !

[seeming not to have seen him before.]

Rhad. My stars ! what do I see !

Zop. Ha ! Rhadamistus !

Rhad. Art thou Zopyrus ? *[rising.]*

Zop. O ! prince ! thy country's boast, the care
of Heaven,

Belov'd of Asia and thy faithful Zopyrus ;

And is it given me once again to see thee ?

O ! let me on that royal hand impress

A thousand times the kifs of loyalty.

Rhad. What evil chance has led thy feet to tread
These horrid rocks, which scarce the sun has
known ?

Zop. I fly the rage of impious Pharasmanes.

Rhad. Guard more thy speech : remember he's
thy king,

And Rhadamistus' father—Say, what crime
Seeks he in thee to punish ?

Zop. This alone,
That I am friend to you.

Rhad. Alas ! 'tis just ;
All, all should now abhor me—I confess it.
O ! I'm an object hateful to the living,
And hateful to myself.

Zop. Not so, my lord,
You are unhappy, but not criminal ;

I know

I know your cruel fortune.

Rhad. Little sure
Thou know'st my fatal story.

Zop. Yes, I know
That all Armenia rose in arms, and deem'd
In you they view'd the murderer of their king.
But well I know, that from your father came
The blow in secret dealt; that he with art
Transferr'd the guilt to you—Zenobia too—

Rhad. O! cease——

Zop. And why, my prince?

Rhad. With that dear name
Thou stabb'st my soul.

Zop. But late she was your joy.
I'm not to learn you fought her hand in marriage.

- *Rhad.* I fought and I obtain'd it—Such a treasure,
Alas! was mine—But O! ye Gods!—

Zop. You weep :
Have you then lost her? Speak : where is Zenobia?
What fate could e'er divide such happy bands?

Rhad. Ah ! Zopyrus, she's dead, and died by
me.

Zop. By you?—Just Gods! and why—

Rhad. Because the earth
Has ne'er produc'd a wretch like Rhadamistus ;
A monster

A monster' void of good ; because I knew not
To curb the mad excess of jealous fury.

Zop. I know not what your words intend.

Rhad. Then hear :

Believ'd a traitor by Armenia's sons
In tumult rais'd, thou know'st I was constrain'd
But late to fly. Along Araxes' banks
I took my course : my lov'd Zenobia then
(Too virtuous confort !) would with me partake
My toil and peril ; but her tender frame
To these unequal prov'd—By slow degrees
Her strength grew less, and pale and breathless now
With tardy steps she follow'd, when the tread
Of fierce pursuers, thickening at our heels,
Drew near and nearer—" O ! my much-lov'd
 lord !"

(At length she cried) " I faint ! I can no more—
" Save, save thy life alone ; but let thy weapon
" First pierce this bosom : leave me not expos'd
" To hostile fury." Think, O ! think, my friend,
What then was Rhadamistus—Lost in grief,
And frantic with despair, I wept, I rav'd ;
When, O ! my Zopyrus, the fatal moment
Was come, when full before my eyes I saw
The Parthian Tiridates' banners wave :
I saw, I knew him ; and that instant banish'd
My small remains of reason : then to mind
I call'd the loves of him and my Zenobia.
Reflection told me all defence was vain

To

To save her from his hands ; and cruel fancy
Now shew'd my consort in a rival's arms.
I trembled, while a sudden chillness crept
Through all my veins, and every thought was
madness.

My tongue refus'd its utterance ; night appear'd
To cloud the air and veil the troubled sun.

Zop. On what could you resolve ?

Rhad. Furious, distracted,
I drew my sword and plung'd it, (Heavenly
powers !)

Deep in my consort's breast, and next my own :
Senseless she sunk within Araxes' stream,
While on his banks I stagger'd, reel'd and fell.

Zop. Unhappy princess !

Rhad. For my punishment,
I died not with the wound : the sudden fall
Conceal'd me from the foes. At morning light
A stranger's pitying hand convey'd me thence—
—But thou attend'st not ; with disorder'd looks
Thou seem'st absorb'd in thought. I know too
well

What thou would'st say—Thou marvell'st still to
see

The earth support me ; that these savage rocks
Fall not in vengeance on my guilty head.
Believe that I am punish'd ; Heaven is just :
The righteous Gods have, for my chastisement,
Consign'd

Consign'd me to myself to feel the stings,
The cruel stings of late but dire remorse.

Zop. [*aside.*] What shall I do? This arm will
not suffice

Alone, to take the forfeit of his crimes.

Rhad. I know what justice now demands. This
hand

Should free a passage for my guilty soul :
But let me first find out those dear remains ;
Pay them the last sad rites of sepulture,
Then close these eyes in death. Unburied, now
Her spirit wanders 'midst these gloomy shades ;
I see it ever flit before my eyes :
I have no peace—O ! let us then, my friend,
Depart to seek her. [*going.*

Zop. Hold : for while the foes
Enclose us round, the attempt would prove in
vain.

Here, in this vale, awhile remain conceal'd,
And wait for my return : with utmost speed
I hasten to pursue the pious search.

Rhad. Then be it so. Go, Zopyrus, and then—

Zop. No more : confide in me, nor quit this
place ;

Expect me soon. Meantime, my prince, compose
Your troubled soul, and moderate your sorrows.
Think what you owe yourself : forget that face,
And from remembrance raise the once-lov'd name.

Rhad.

Rhad. Fain would I, Zopyrus, take thy friendly
council,
But O ! what power can drive her image hence ?

Ah ! why, when fated to sustain
The loss of all we love below,
Must recollection still remain
To keep alive a cureless woe ?

When grief is vain the afflicted mind
Will prize the blessing once our own ;
And each neglected good we find
Then more, by loss, severely known.
[*Exit.*

S C E N E II.

ZOPYRUS alone.

Alas ! Zenobia, all my hopes are vanish'd—
Yes, tyrant, thou shalt meet thy due reward.
Soon, with my trusty friends, not far conceal'd,
I'll hasten to return and glut my vengeance,
And from its bosom tear thy treacherous heart.

The wretch shall fall with gasping breath,
And struggling in the pangs of death,
Shall view the hand by which he dies.
Let him but fall : let Phoebus' light
For me be chang'd to endless night,
So day to him its beam denies. [*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E . III.

An open country watered by the river Araxes : on one side are pastoral cottages, and on the other side the view is terminated by a range of pleasant hills. At the foot of the nearest hill is a rustic grotto, the entrance almost covered with ivy and shrubs. At a distance beyond the river is seen the royal city of Artaxata, with a magnificent bridge leading to it. The Parthian army encamped by the river.

Enter ZENOBIA and ÆGLE from one of the cottages.

Zen. No, gentle Ægle, seek not to attend
Zenobia's steps : I must not now permit thee.
A wretched fugitive, who knows, alas !
Where fate may lead me next ? Should I receive
thee

To share my dangers, ill must I repay
The goodness of thy heart ; enough already
Thy kindness has been shewn : let this suffice.
Twice have I liv'd by thee : thy pity drew me
From the swift eddies of Araxes' tide :
My wounded bosom by thy care was heal'd :
I found a sweet asylum in thy cottage,
And thou to me wert comforter and friend,
Companion and adviser : leaving thee,

My loss is more than thine. Thou must not hence;
In this thou hast no will : thy duty here
Detains thee near an aged father ; mine
Commands me to pursue a husband lost :
Our several duties claim us each—Farewell.

Ægl. But thus alone, without a guide, to trace
These savage woods—Such courage in a woman
Is surely wondrous.

Zen. Long I've been inur'd
To every trial. From my earliest age
I learn'd to suffer : thrice five years are past
Since, once before, Armenia's rebel sons
Constrain'd my flight ; and then, alas ! I lost
A dear and infant sister, ravish'd from me ;
Or happier, she amidst the tumult perish'd,
While I still live reserv'd for endless woes.

Ægl. And would'st thou, midst such peril, thus
pursue
A cruel husband's steps ?

Zen. More kindly name
A hero fam'd for every royal virtue.

Ægl. Is jealous fury then a royal virtue ?

Zen. Say, who is perfect ? Let us learn to par-
don
The faults of others while we view our own.

Ægl. To slay his wife !—

Zen. Involuntary crimes
We call not guilt.—Alas ! in such a state

My

My Rhadamistus was no more himself,
 But, urg'd by sudden frenzy, rais'd his weapon.
 Not Rhadamistus then assail'd Zenobia :
 Not love, but fury struck ; nor saw he then
 The victim of his momentary rage.

Ægl. O! generous dame! permit me now to
 seek

For tidings of your spouse, while you remain—

Zen. No, dearest *Ægle*, no—it must not be.
 My longer tarriance here would risk too far
 Zenobia's fame and virtue.

Ægl. How, Zenobia?

Zen. Full well I know thou little canst conceive
 What mean my words : then hear, and truly say
 If fear in me is blame. The youthful leader
 Of yonder squadrons, which thou see'st encamp'd,
 Is *Tiridates*, brother to the king
 Who sways the Parthian sceptre. Never yet
 The Gods have form'd a prince who better claim'd
 The love of all : a spirit more exalted,
 A form more graceful, or of gentler manners.
 I lov'd him, and was lov'd, (without a blush
 I may confess a passion since subdued)
 He wish'd, he sought my hand ; my father gladly
 Receiv'd his suit, but Rhadamistus then
 With him contended for Zenobia's faith ;
 And hence the king, my father, urg'd my lover
 To seek for succour from his royal brother,
 Of arms and warriors : strengthen'd thus against

His rival's force, to seek Armenia's court,
And tie th' expected knot. He parted thence,
And I remain'd. I tremble, while remembrance
Recalls that mournful parting : well my heart
Prefag'd in that, alas ! our last farewell.
While anxious, restless still, my ardent vows
Would hasten his return, one day my father
Declar'd, (O ! death to hear !) he wish'd me now
The wife of Rhadamistus ; that a cause
Of high import had chang'd his former purpose ;
That my refusal would expose to peril
His peace, his throne, his dignity and life.
What could I do, a subject and a daughter ?
I wept, deplor'd my fate, and begg'd to die ;
But I obey'd ; nor was my hand alone
Given at his will : I gain'd a mightier conquest,
And moulded my affections to his choice :
With honour's ties I fortified my virtue,
And sacrific'd the lover to the wife.

Ægl. And saw you never Tiridates more ?

Zen. Forbid it all ye powers ! This fear alone
Now drives me hence ; not that I doubt myself :
No, *Ægle*, no ; I feel *Zenobia's* soul
By reason measures every thought and deed—
My victory is certain ; but the struggle
Is dreadful in extreme : we must not less
Avoid the shew of guilt than guilt itself.
A woman's fame is like the crystal, foil'd
With every touch ; or like the feeble reed,

That

That bends with every blast.

Ægl. Unhappy prince !
What must he feel at such heart-breaking news ?

Zen. To him 'tis yet unknown. A secret marriage
United Rhadamistus' fate with mine ;
And Tiridates to the promis'd nuptials
Return'd unconscious of th' event.

Ægl. O ! Heavens !
To find Armenia rous'd to general tumult ;
The throne now vacant and the monarch slain,
And all his hopes destroy'd !—Zenobia too—

Zen. To find Zenobia in another's arms.

Ægl. O ! cruel destiny !

Zen. Now say, my friend,
Can I expose my constancy to view
The grief of such a prince ; of one so lov'd ?
Of one who merits all ? Who, when he hears
This heart is made another's——O ! farewell.

Ægl. And will you leave me ?

Zen. Yes, my dearest *Ægle*,
I fly this place, for danger threatens here ;
A thousand thoughts, a thousand kind memorials—

Ægl. And whom can harmless pity wrong ?

Zen. Alas !
The snares of guileful pity must be fear'd :
Farewell ! one kind embrace and rest in peace.

Ah !

Ah ! rest in peace, on all thy days
May stars propitious shine ;
Nor dart on them malignant rays,
As now they dart on mine.

Thou well may'st render thanks to Heaven,
Thus born in humble state :
O ! might it e'er to me be given,
To change for thine my fate ! [Exit.

S C E N E IV.

ÆGLE alone.

Unhappy princefs ! how my bosom feels
For all her pains ! A simple shepherdess,
Poor and unknown, to thee is cause of envy !
Ah : what are Fortune's gifts ? And what avails
To toil for these, if when Heaven frowns upon us,
These gifts so ill defend the fond possessors ?

Though Indian seas rich gems disclose,
Not gentler there the current flows,
Nor more serene the skies.
The land that least will fear the power
Of ocean's tide, where tempests roar,
Is some lone bay, whose quiet shore
The distant wind defies. [Exit.

SCENE

S C E N E V.

ZENOBIA *alone, searching round the stage.*

O ! Rhadamistus ! whither art thou gone ?
My lord, my husband—Surely I beheld
And close pursued him—Midst these forest paths
I've lost all track. That way his feet were bent—
Ah ! whither hast thou wander'd, ill-advis'd ?
These parts are fill'd with Rhadamistus' foes :
Preserve him, Gods ! in such impending dangers.
But what is my design ? Shall I proceed ?
I risk too far—Then let me find out Ægle,
And she shall seek—Suffice, ye cruel stars !
Suffice, my wretchedness is now complete.

Leave, O ! ye pitying powers ! O ! leave
My breast awhile in peace ;
But if for ever I must grieve,
Yet grant a short release.

So shall, alas ! my wounded mind,
Long stranger to repose,
At least recruited vigour find
To bear redoubled woes.

[goes out and returns again.]

O ! wretched me !—Behold from yonder part
Where Tiridates comes ! Almighty powers !

O ! how

O ! how I tremble ! All my soul's in tumult !
Zenobia, fly—Ah ! fly this fatal meeting.
That hollow cavern in these friendly rocks
Shall, while he passes, hide me from his sight.
[enters the grotto.

S C E N E VI.

Enter TIRIDATES. *ZENOBIA in the grotto.*

Tir. Mithranes not return'd ? His long delay
Fills me with terror—But he comes—Alas !
What mean those looks disturb'd ? O ! haste, my
friend,
Kill me, or give me comfort—Where's my love ?
What tidings hast thou brought ?

S C E N E VII.

Enter MITHRANES.

Mit. Ah, Tiridates !

Tir. O Heavens ! what cruel silence ! Speak—
Is then

Zenobia's fate a secret ? None can tell
What has befallen, or whither fate has driven her ?

Mit. Alas ! too well 'tis known,

Tir. O ! speak.

Mit. She's dead.

Tir. O ! all ye powers of Heaven !

Mit. The wretch who slew
The father, took the hapless daughter's life.

Tir. What villain ?——

Mit. Rhadamistus ; he, the inhuman,
By him Zenobia died.

Tir. O ! murderous slave !
And could he then—O ! no, it cannot be :
What heart would not relent at charms like hers ?
He lov'd her too—Believe it not, Mithranes.

Mit. Grant Heaven 'twere doubtful ! On Araxes'
banks

He gave the wound, and from the further shore
A fisher saw her, with the cruel stroke,
Fall in the rapid stream : swift plunging in
He swam to give her aid, but all in vain ;
She sunk beneath the tide, from which he drew
Her floating bloody vest. Alas ! his tale
Admits no gleam of hope ; myself beheld
Zenobia's vest, and knew it for her own.

Tir. Assist me, heavenly powers !

Zen. [*listening.*] O ! cruel trial !

Tir. The day now fails before my darken'd
fight. [*leans against a tree.*]

Zen. [*apart.*] O ! give me counsel, Gods !

Mit. Be calm, my prince :
The mighty Gods such sufferings send to prove
A hero's

A hero's virtue.

Tir. Leave me.

Mit. Shall I leave you
In such a state? How would the world reproach
Mithranes' loyal truth?

Tir. Depart, depart.

Mit. Must I depart? Your mandate still
Directs my faithful heart;
Obedient to my prince's will,
Reluctant I depart.

What dire effects from grief may rise,
That mines the secret soul,
When counsel no relief supplies
The danger to control. [*Exit.*

S C E N E VIII.

TIRIDATES. ZENOBIA *apart.*

Tir. Is then Zenobia dead, and does my heart
Still cherish life? For whom? What hope can
more
Attract thee now? What hast thou now to wish?
Enjoyments, treasure, pomp, life, honours, all
For her were dear. I lose the object now
Of all my toils and cares—To me the world
Is lost for ever!—No, ungrateful stars! [*rises.*
Think not to part me from Zenobia ever:

This sword, in your despite, amid the dark
Oblivious realm shall join me to my love.

[*draws his sword.*]

Zen. [*coming out of the grotto.*] What do I see !

Tir. [*to himself.*] Dear object of my wishes !
Ah ! think not yet to pass the Stygian waves
Till Tiridates comes—'Tis this——

[*about to stab himself.*]

Zen. O ! hold !

[*stopping him.*]

Tir. Ye Gods !

Zen. O ! hold and live. [*takes away his sword.*]

Tir. Zenobia ! Heavens !

[*Zen. is going.*]

My life, my soul !

[*following her.*]

Zen. Forbear to follow me :

I am not what I seem.

[*going.*]

Tir. Ha ! would'st thou then——

[*about to follow.*]

Zen. Forbear to follow me—O ! let me, prince,
Entreat thus much ; and she who gave thee life
Can ask not less.

Tir. But is it possible ?

[*following her.*]

Zen. Stop, or I slay myself.

[*about to stab herself.*]

Tir. Just Heavens !—Ah ! yet——

Zen. If you advance a step this weapon's point
Shall drink Zenobia's blood.

Tir.

Tir. Ah ! hold—I yield——
I quit thee—I obey—But hear me : whither,
Ah ! whither goest thou ?

Zen. Whither fate now calls. [*going.*

Tir. Zenobia !—O ! unkind——

Zen. Zenobia's dead. [*Exit.*

S C E N E IX.

TIRIDATES alone.

Princess ! my love ! O ! hear me still——Ye
powers !
Where shall I turn ? I dare not, thus forbidden,
Pursue her steps, nor can remain behind :
This, this is torture.

S C E N E X.

Enter MITHRANES.

Mit. From Artaxata,
My lord, the ambassadors are now arriv'd,
Deputed by Armenia.

Tir. [*seeing, but not attending to him.*] Haste,
my friend,
O ! haste—For me pursue—In pity haste,
And stay her flight.

Mit. Whom shall I stay ?

Tir.

Tir. She lives !
And breathes this vital air.

Mit. Who lives, my prince ?

Tir. Zenobia lives.

Mit. Alas ! he raves.

Tir. O ! Heaven !
Why dost thou loiter ? Yonder lies the way :
Her track is there.

Mit. But yet——

Tir. [*impatiently.*] While thou delay'st
The time in vain debate—she's lost.

Mit. I go.

[*aside.*] O ! how excess of grief distracts the sense !
[*Exit.*

S C E N E XI.

TIRIDATES *alone.*

I know not where I am—I'm struck with wonder,
And all appears a dream. Alas ! how ill
Her former tenderness agrees with rigour
So harsh and cruel ! Does Zenobia hate,
Or love her Tiridates ? If she hate me,
Why would she save my life ? And if she love,
Then wherefore fly my fight ? O ! I should doubt
'Twere all deception, but too deeply here,
Here in this breast her image is engrav'd.
And can it be, some other nymph may bear
Those

Those semblant features? Nature, with her work
Perhaps enchanted, might again produce
Another form like hers—O! no, those eyes
Were fure Zenobia's—Those, and those alone
Could wake the inward transports that I feel.
This soul could ne'er to other eyes conſign
Such power to rule the heart of Tiridates.

I know ye well, dear beauteous eyes,
I know ye by the heaving ſighs;
The tumults here confeſs'd.
I'm not deceiv'd; for ſtill the ſame,
Thoſe looks alone can feed the flame
That burns within my breaſt. [*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T II. S C E N E I.

The open country, with Ægle's cottage.

TIRIDATES, MITHRANES.

Tir. But if myself I saw her ? If myself
Heard her but now ? Yes, still her living form
Is plac'd before my eyes ; her well-known voice
Still vibrates on my heart—Zenobia lives !
I dreamt it not, Mithranes.

Mit. Lovers, fir,
Even waking dream—Affliction clouds the sense
And blunts our reason : what is not, we see ;
And what is present oft eludes our sight.
The soul, from habit, figures to herself
The ideas that delight us.—Each with ease
Will feign what most he wishes.

Tir. No : these feet
Had trac'd her steps, but that the cruel fight
Of my Zenobia, arm'd to pierce her bosom,
Froze all my vital powers.

Mit. O ! think, my prince,
Think of the duties which your rank demands.
The Armenians offer you their vacant throne,
And ask, for this, the head of Rhadamistus.
Embrace the moment of propitious Fortune :
You know too well her favours never last.

Tir.

Tir. Let Rhadamistus then be fought; the
traitor
Shall meet his punishment. But think not, friend,
The bright reward of royalty incites
The zeal of Tiridates; no, I burn
To flay a victim to Zenobia's wrongs.

Mit. Then fill you cherish hope?

Tir. But late I question'd
A gentle shepherdess, her name is *Ægle* :
Behold her cottage here; from her we best
May learn more certain tidings.

Mit. But what said
The maid when question'd?

Tir. Nothing she replied.

Mit. And yet you hope?

Tir. I do—At what I ask'd
She seem'd confus'd: she look'd on me and blush'd.
She strove to speak—began as if to explain
Her secret thoughts, then sunk again to silence.

Mit. Alas! how little will suffice to feed
A lover's hopes.

Tir. I'll speak again with *Ægle*;
Go, lead her to me.

Mit. Instant I obey. [*goes into the cottage.*]

Tir. What cruel conflict now of hope and fear
Divides my breast! No other state on earth
Can equal what I feel.

Mit.

Mit. [*returning.*] The shepherdefs
Is absent thence, and vacant now the dwelling.

Tir. I'll wait for her return.—Go, seek the
camp.

Mit. Your care is vain: the bloody robe which
late
These eyes beheld——

Tir. Cruel, unkind Mithranes,
What have I done ?—O ! take not from me thus
The last dear hope—At least——

Mit. Too oft, my prince,
You know that hope is with deception join'd.
[*Exit.*]

S C E N E II.

TIRIDATES *alone.*

I know not if deceit may give
That hope the wretched find ;
But this I know, by hope we live ;
The balm that heals the mind.

I know that oft in sleep we prove
The solace of our woe ;
And oft from dreams of those we love
Our waking comforts flow.

[*goes into the cottage.*]

SCENE

S C E N E III.

ZENOBIA, ÆGLE.

Zen. Go then, my friend, go seek and bring him to me.

From what I have said thou wilt not fail to know
The husband I have lost. Amidst these woods
He surely dwells. Till thy return I'll wait
Conceal'd within thy cottage—O! I tremble,
Lest once again I meet with Tiridates.
The first encounter teaches me with care
To shun a second.

Ægl. He who loves you, princess,
May plead forgiveness: never have I view'd
A mien more graceful.

Zen. Hast thou seen him then?
Ah! where?

Ægl. But now I met him: he, who seeks
Tidings of you from all, with me awhile
Discours'd of his Zenobia.

Zen. Ah! what then
Could Ægle say?

Ægl. With stupid gaze I stood
To wonder at his form, his gentle looks,
His pleasing speech——

Zen. I ask not this, my friend:

Awake not thus, with such insidious praise,
The conflict in my bosom.—Didst thou then
To him reveal my fortune?

Ægl. I remember'd
Your caution given, and kept a faithful silence.

Zen. Now go, and with my spouse return——
Take heed,
And should'st thou meet with Tiridates, still
Observe my laws prescrib'd.

Ægl. Were I dispos'd,
I never could betray you : in his presence
My lips refuse an utterance to my words.

A magic in those eyes I view,
A charm that ne'er before I knew :
With him my tongue its speech denies.
He questions me : I strive to speak ;
Confus'd, the blushes stain my cheek ;
And while in vain for words I seek,
My words dissolve in broken sighs. [*Exit.*

S C E N E IV.

ZENOBIA. TIRIDATES *in the cottage.*

Zen. Alas ! my heart, too well I understand
Thy feelings now : thou gladly would'st embrace
(Thus left alone,) the freedom to complain.
Complaints are bred from weakness, but Zenobia
Lefs

Less fears another's censure than her own ;
And even in secret would she blush to find
Her firmness shaken. You, ye powers ! who
breath'd

Such virtue in my soul, expose it not
To meet a second trial ; let one proof
Suffice my triumph : lead me not again
To Tiridates' fight.—How can I ever
Declare myself another's ? This confession
Might kindle all his rage against my husband.
I tremble at the thought—And ah ! his grief
Would strike too deeply here. Should chance
once more

This way conduct him—Let me haste to shun
The cruel risk. This cottage offers me
A wish'd asylum—Ah ! some stranger here—
I see, or fear impress'd upon my mind,
Has feign'd—O ! Heaven ! 'tis he ! 'tis Tiridates !

Tir. [*coming out.*] Zenobia ! 'tis in vain to fly
me now :

Where'er thou goest behold me present still.

Zen. Stay, Tiridates—hold.

Tir. Alas ! Zenobia,
What shall I say ?

Zen. [*aside.*] Now, now my trial comes !

Tir. And am I Tiridates ? Is it thus
Thou giv'st me welcome ? Princess most lov'd,
Is this the hour for which so much I languish'd ?
Could

Could the short space of two revolving moons
Suffice to change thee thus? What mean these
cold,

These freezing looks? Ah! what has robb'd me
thus

Of all thy wonted tendernefs? Has aught
Against me kindled thy resentment? Speak:
Hast thou forgot thy faith? Impossible!
Thou art not capable of stains like these,
I know, my life——

Zen. My lord, since you compel me
With you awhile in converse to remain,
Though but some moments, let not these at least
Be spent in vain.

Tir. And does it then displease thee——

Zen. It does—Reluctant I remain; then hear
me,
And give me proof of Tiridates' virtue.

Tir. I tremble while thou speak'st.

Zen. The sacred ties
Of regal nuptials, by the hand of Fate
Are form'd in Heaven; nor is the choice our own.
For had the stars allow'd me to direct
My life, I then had found in Tiridates
The man of all mankind to make me happy.
But this can never be; our destiny
For ever parts me from thee, and I bow
Beneath the hard decree.—Go then in peace,
And

And leave me here in peace.—O ! never more
Appear before these eyes ; take from us, prince,
Such danger to our virtue—Yes, that virtue
Which join'd us first, and now dissolves the bands.

Tir. Assist me, Gods ! and must I never more
Indulge my hopes ?

Zen. You have no longer hope.

Tir. But wherefore ? Who, ah ! who can bear
thee from me ?
What crime of mine ?

Zen. Ah ! what avails it, prince,
To dwell on that with pain, which will but raise
The affections duty bids us now subdue ?
Farewell ! too long already you detain me.
'Tis not your guilt or mine that parts us now :
Let this suffice, and seek to know no further.

Tir. Barbarian ! canst thou then so coldly speak ?
Thou know'st not thou art my fame, my peace,
my life ;
That if I lose thee, all to me is lost ;
That never other object——

Zen. Prince, farewell ! [going.

Tir. Tell me at least——

Zen. I cannot.

Tir. Hear me.

Zen. Oh !
I must not hear you.

Tir.

Tir. Dost thou hate me thus ?
Thus fly my fight ?

Zen. Ah ! did I hate you, fir,
I still might have remain'd,—I fear your presence ;
'Tis hostile to my duty : though my reason
Is firmly fix'd, yet great are your deserts,
And O ! such conflict serves at least to rend,
If not subdue my heart—And see you not,
(O ! Heaven !) that now before you—that re-
membrance—

Depart, depart—I shall confess too much—
Respect at once my virtue and your own.
Yes, I entreat you, prince, by all your soul
Has priz'd on earth, or most reveres in Heaven ;
Even by the tender love that bound us once ;
By the dear spirit that informs your bosom ;
By these sad tears you force me thus to shed,
O ! leave me—fly, my lord—avoid my presence.

Tir. And must I see thee never, never more ?

Zen. No, never, prince, if still to you are dear
My peace and glory.

Tir. Cruel, cruel sentence !

Zen. Go, seek for comfort and farewell !
And happy, though in absence dwell,
Nor lose a thought on me.

Tir.

Tir. Ah ! speak not thus, relentless fair.

But sooner from this bosom tear

The heart that bleeds for thee.

Zen. I feel a cold through every vein.

Tir. My pulse forgets to move.

Both. What sufferings now must both sustain !

O ! unpropitious love !

Such anguish only death can cure :

Not such the happy know,

Who ne'er, alas ! like us endure

The pangs of parting woe.

[Exeunt severally.]

[Before the departure of Zen. and Rhad. Zop. appears behind, unseen of them, and stops to observe them.]

S C E N E V.

ZOPYRUS and followers.

Zenobia, Heavens ! and Tiridates here !

Zenobia lives again ? And wherefore thus

Depart from him in tears ? It must be so—

She loves him still—But no ; the rigid fair,

Virtuous Zenobia, wife to Rhadamistus—

—Yet, what can rigour or can virtue aught

Avail to rule the bosom's tenderest passion ?

What cruel, what unheard-of jealousy

Is this I feel ? To find some happier lover
Dispute her heart, yet know not who's my rival.

With doubtful jealousy that glows
Within my tortur'd breast, nor knows
What secret rival to oppose,

A thousand racking pangs I prove.
At once I love, at once I hate,
And such the tenour of my fate,
I dare not hope revenge or love.

[as he is going he sees Rhad. and stops.]

But see from far where Rhadamistus comes,
And comes this way. My followers are at hand ;
Delay not then his death. Perhaps already
He may suspect me : where we parted last,
He stay'd not my return.—But if Zenobia
Is Tiridates' lover, by his death
I shall but from a powerful foe deliver
A favour'd rival.—Could I find the means
To kindle strife between them ; make them fall
By mutual slaughter, and myself from both
Usurp that fruit the victor should have gain'd—
This were a master-piece of policy.

It must be duly weigh'd.—*[to his followers.]*

Amidst these trees

Be now, my friends, conceal'd.—*[they retire.]*

Behold him here :

Now to my work—But with him comes a nymph.

I'll

I'll wait till she retires, and he alone
Remains for my design. *[conceals himself.]*

S C E N E VI.

Enter RHADAMISTUS and ÆGLE, as in conversation. ZOPYRUS apart.

Rhad. Deceive me not,
Ah ! courteous shepherdes.—To sport with misery
Were cruelty, alas ! that ill would suit
Thy gentle nature.

Ægl. Think not I deceive you :
Your comfort lives.—I drew her from the stream
Pierc'd with her wound, and sav'd her at the peril,
With her unhappy life to lose my own.

Rhad. Ah ! lovely nymph ! my tutelary God-
des !
Is such compassion found in savage woods ?
Yes—virtue there resides ; in peopled cities
Are only known the semblance and the name.

Ægl. We now have reach'd the place.—Ex-
pect me here ;
I'll haste before you and prepare Zenobia.
[goes into the cottage.]

Rhad. I burn with fond impatience to behold
her,
And yet I tremble to approach her presence :
I'm warm'd by love and chill'd by deep remorse.

Ægl. [*coming out of the cottage.*] Zenobia is departed ; vainly there I seek to find her.

Rhad. O ! Almighty Powers !

Ægl. Be not dismay'd : she surely will return ; Perchance for us she seeks.

Rhad. O ! no—She hates, She shuns me now—Alas ! I cannot blame her ; Just is her hatred, *Ægle* ; nor have I Deserv'd to suffer less from her resentment.

Ægl. Zenobia hate you ? Shun you ? Ill indeed You know your spouse : such false suspicion wrongs The truest consort that the world has known. For you she seeks, for you alone she sighs, And trembles but for you.—She even defends, And loves your cruelty ; while he, who hears Her plead your cause, no longer can condemn you : She calls the hand that struck her merciful.

Rhad. O ! let us haste to find her ; at her feet Let me expire with love, with shame and sorrow.

Ægl. Removing hence, you may perchance but lose Her whom you hope to find.

Rhad. Go then, my *Ægle*, Do thou pursue the search—Alas ! delay not—Forgive my hasty warmth—I sigh to gain A blessing mourn'd so long with heart-felt anguish.

Ægl.

Ægl. Though press'd with anguish, who
would e'er

Beneath his grief repine ;
Who, though decreed such grief to bear,
Could say, " That heart is mine ?"

Two souls whom equal passions sway,
One only soul will prove ;
Since both but one desire obey,
And glow with mutual love. [*Exit.*

S C E N E VII.

RHADAMISTUS. ZOPYRUS *apart.*

Rhad. O ! princess, worthy of a spouse less
cruel ;

Generous Zenobia ! When was ever known
A spirit more exalted ?—You, who seek
With envy to detract from female glory,
Say, which of all our heroes e'er could boast
A virtue more sublime ?

Zop. [*coming forward,*] Where, where, my
prince,
Have you at distance wander'd ? Is it thus
You waited my return ?

Rhad. O ! come and share
With me my happy fortune—my Zenobia—

Zop. Zenobia lives.

Rhad.

Rhad. And dost thou know it too ?

Zop. Would I had never known it !

Rhad. Say'st thou ? Wherefore ?

Zop. Wherefore ? Enquire no further, Rhadamistus :

Forget her—She's unworthy of your love.

Rhad. Tell me what cause——

Zop. Ah ! what avails, my lord,
To afflict you further ?

Rhad. Speak : thy silence more
Afflicts me than thy speech.

Zop. I shall obey.
I saw your faithless spouse—but, prince, already
Your cheek is pale—Forgive me, sir ; it better
Becomes me to be silent.

Rhad. Speak, I charge thee.

Zop. Since you command—then blame not me,
my lord :

But late I with her Tiridates saw
Your faithless consort : from their view conceal'd,
I heard them speak of love.—He to her mind
Recall'd each promise given, while she to him
With solemn vows declar'd her former flame,
Long cherish'd, burnt with all its wonted warmth.

Rhad. False traitor ! peace—Too well I know
Zenobia ;
She ne'er could thus betray me.

Zop.

Zop. 'Tis my duty
To suffer all from you ; but, O ! my prince,
This sure I merit not, for having seen
Your dearest peace betray'd : yourself compell'd
me

At first to speak, and then——

Rhad. O Heaven ! I never
Would doubt Zenobia's truth.

Zop. Without my speaking
You knew she fled you—but perchance you knew
not

That all her soul was fix'd on Tiridates,
And that a first affection never dies.

Rhad. Too true, by Heaven !

Zop. [*aside.*] 'Tis well—the poison works.

Rhad. Immortal Powers ! Are women thus in-
constant ?

O ! happy you, by friendly stars ordain'd
Inhabitants of old Arcadian shades,
If you, as fame reports, deriv'd your birth
From senseless trunks.

Zop. Ere you, my lord, aspir'd
To gain her heart, 'twas given to Tiridates,
And whilst he lives he ever will possess it.

Rhad. But shall not long—I fly to pierce his
breast.

Zop. Yet hold—What can you hope ? Amidst
his guard

Of troops in arms, you but in vain expose
Your life to hazard.—Could we draw him thence
Far from his friends to some sequester'd part—

Rhad. But how ?

Zop. Who knows ? Let me reflect a little—
We must secure the blow.

Rhad. But rage like mine
Brooks no delay.

Zop. Then hear—By my contrivance,
A wily message, in Zenobia's name,
Shall lure him to a place that suits our purpose,

Rhad. But what if he mistrust the truth ?—
'Twere well

At least to cloak it with some specious token.
Ah ! hold—this shall secure it—take this ring ;
It was Zenobia's, given by Tiridates
When last they parted : she, that fatal day
Which saw our nuptial rites, (as if she meant
To abjure all memory of her former love,)
On me bestow'd it—then a treacherous pledge,
But now the faithful instrument of vengeance.

Zop. [*aside.*] Auspicious Fortune ! [*to Rhad.*]
In the lonely valley
Where first we met—

Rhad. But what—

Zop. The charge be mine
To make our plot secure,

Rhad,

Rhad. But still remember
Ten thousand furies struggle in my bosom.

I nought but venom now respire,
My heart Megæra's torches fire,
 Alecto's snakes my bosom breeds.
No more with sighs and tears I mourn,
All grief is past—I rave, I burn
 With rage that every rage exceeds. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E VIII.

ZOPYRUS, and followers apart.

Zop. O ! glorious victory ! For me my foes
Will wage the fight, while I, without a blow
Shall make Zenobia mine.—Come forth, my
 friends, [*they come out.*
Go hence, and round enclose the vale of myrtles ;
Thither will Tiridates come to fight
With Rhadamistus : there remain conceal'd,
Nor interrupt their combat ; but when one
Shall fall beneath his rival, let your weapons
Transfix the victor, wearied with his toil.
Away—but some behind abide with me :
I have a message soon for Tiridates.
Yet soft—I fear no follower of my own
Must be an envoy here : he might discover—
Some artless nymph, or rustic swain were best—

But is not that I see—[*looking out.*] Propitious
Gods!

Look there, my friends, look where Zenobia comes:
I leave her to your care.—When I am gone,
By stratagem or force conduct her to me.
What have I more to ask, could I but call
That heart my own; or could I know at least
Who would dispute it with me? Both the rivals
'Tis true will perish, but of these my hatred
Knows not on which to fix; and doubtful hatred
Must tarnish all the pleasure of revenge.
This secret shall be known: my mind even now
Suggests an artful falsehood that shall force
Zenobia's self to unveil the truth to me.

S C E N E IX.

Enter ZENOBIA.

Zen. [*entering.*] What do I see? Thou in Ar-
menia here;
Thou Zopyrus?

Zop. Ah! princess, blest event
That brings thee thus before me: 'tis from thee
I counsel seek, or rather seek command,
In what concerns thy heart's most dear affection.

Zen. Even now I hasten to pursue my spouse.

Zop. To find or lose him must depend on thee.

Zen. What dost thou mean?

Zop.

Zop. I'm bound by solemn compact,
(Which nothing can annul,) to take the life
Of Rhadamistus or of Tiridates.

Zen. O ! heavenly powers !

Zop. Attend my words.—The first
Is by my followers now detain'd a prisoner ;
The second, by a message forg'd to blind him,
For which this gem must seem a certain pledge,
[*shews the ring.*
Will soon be drawn to where his death is plann'd.

Zen. Whence did thy hand receive——

Zop. First hear me speak :
The power is mine of these to kill or save
Him whom my will elects.—That choice shall now
Depend on thee : the one by thee was lov'd,
And one thou hast espous'd : for me determine,
And, at thy pleasure, now absolve or sentence.

Zen. And must I then—O ! cruel fate !—But
whence
Such impious mandate ?—What detested cause—
Who thus compels thee ?

Zop. Now 'twere long to tell ;
Time presses : much already have I lost
In seeking thee—now open all thy heart,
And let me be dismiss'd.

Zen. Eternal Powers !
And could'st thou then consent (O ! most in-
human !)

To

To such a deed as this?

Zop. The sovereign mandate
Admits of no dispute : my life must answer
Should I neglect to obey.

Zen. What punishment,
What recompense, what power, howe'er supreme,
Can make that just which bears the stamp of guilt?

Zop. Adieu!—I came not hither to dispute
With idle words.—Thou see'st how far, Zenobia,
Respect for thee might fix my wavering choice.
—Myself shall then determine. [going.]

Zen. Stay, O! stay.

Zop. [returning.] What would'st thou say?

Zen. Fain would I—yet reflect—
Assist me, Gods!

Zop. I understand thee well.
I must, without thy speech, prevent thy wishes :
This ever was the privilege of women.
Full well I know with reason must thou hate
Inhuman Rhadamistus : well I know
His stormy passions, jealousy unjust ;
The impious barbarous wound—enough—ere long
Thou shalt have ample vengeance. [going.]

Zen. O! perfidious!
And dost thou think Zenobia's heart can harbour
Impiety like this?

Zop. Be not offended :

Thy

Thy silence had misled me—Ho ! conduct
[*to his followers.*

The princess to her consort, while I haste
To take the forfeit life of Tiridates. [*going.*

Zen. Yet hear me !—O ! ye powers ! you put
my virtue

To too severe a trial—Must these lips
Pronounce the dreadful fate of Tiridates ?
How has he injur'd me ? The foul of honour,
The pride of spotless faith—and can I ever—

Zop. Does still Zenobia doubt ?

Zen. She has no doubts :
She knows too well whom duty bids her save,
But shrinks with horror at the dreadful ransom.

Zop. I must no longer here remain—decide,
Or I am gone.

Zen. O ! yet a moment stay.
Thou surely may'st consent——

Zop. We lose the time
In vain expostulation.—One must die.

Zen. Let then the death—O Heaven ! how
shall I speak it ?
—Preserve for me——

Zop. Say—whom ?

Zen. Preserve them both,
If thou would'st have me owe to thee my peace ;
If both thou canst not save—yet save my husband.

Zop.

Zop. [*aside.*] 'Tis Rhadamistus then enjoys her
love.

[*to her.*] And canst thou then, Zenobia, will the
death

Of such a faithful lover ?

Zen. [*in agony.*] Save my husband !
And tell me not (O Heaven !) what victim dies.

Zop. Would'st thou to life thy lord release,
To loose his bonds be mine ;
Would'st thou preserve thy future peace,
That care to me resign.

I pardon every doubt of me,
Whose heart thou ne'er hast known ;
But soon, by what I've done for thee,
Shall Zopyrus be shown. [*Exit.*

S C E N E X.

ZENOBIA alone.

And dost thou still, inhuman ! live, still breathe ?
And could'st thou then pronounce the fatal sen-
tence,

Yet feel not instant death, or break with horror
The heart where gratitude no longer dwells ?
Since then—but what Zenobia, hast thou said ?
Why wander thus ?—Thou hast fulfill'd thy duty,
And now lament'st with all a woman's weakness.

O ! think

O! think this grief eclipses every merit
Of such a triumph: equal is the guilt
Of evil actions done, or good repented.
Alas! 'tis true—yet Tiridates dies!
And dies by my decree—even now, perhaps,
With his last breath invokes Zenobia's name.
Defend him, pitying Gods! To save my husband
Was mine, 'tis yours to succour innocence.
The suppliant prayers of one who knows not falsehood
Fly wing'd to Heaven.—I come not now before you
With sorrows that derive their source from crimes:
From a pure spring my tears unfullied flow.

Ye righteous Gods! who only know
The heart's conceal'd desires,
Can tell if pure compassion now
My blameless vow inspires.

'Tis true, from virtue's path severe
You bid me ne'er depart;
But different must in Heaven appear
The just and cruel heart.

[*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

A C T III. S C E N E I.

*A wood.*RHADAMISTUS *and* ÆGLE.*Rhad.* Whence hadst thou, nymph, that ring?*Ægl.* A stranger's hand
Intrusted it to me.*Rhad.* To what intent?*Ægl.* He, with this token, to the vale of myrtles
Gave me commission, in Zenobia's name,
To invite prince Tiridates.*Rhad.* Didst thou seek him?*Ægl.* I fought him not.*Rhad.* And why?*Ægl.* Because I deem'd
Some treachery was design'd.*Rhad.* [*aside.*] In evil hour
Did Zopyrus to this nymph intrust his charge.
[*to her.*] But wherefore didst thou then accept
from him
The secret message?*Ægl.* Left another hand
Should execute his purpose.*Rhad.* [*aside.*] Now I know

Why

Why I so long have staid, and staid in vain,
For Tiridates at the appointed valley.

Ægl. I go to tell Zenobia all the treason
My thoughts suggest.

Rhad. Forbear : it nought avails
To tell Zenobia.

Ægl. Yes, 'twere meet she knew
That some dark traitor plots against her fame
And spotless faith.

Rhad. And canst thou know to whom
Belongs the name of traitor, or of faithful ?

Ægl. And canst thou doubt ?

Rhad. There is no longer doubt—
Zenobia's falsehood——

Ægl. Hold : thou mak'st my blood
Run cold with horror.

Rhad. Know——

Ægl. I know full well
That little thou deserv'st such truth and love.

Rhad. But hear me, nymph, I am——

Ægl. Unjust, ungrateful,
Inhuman, cruel—— [going.]

Rhad. If thou canst, remove
Suspicion from me. [following her.]

Ægl. Rather let it still
Dwell in thy breast, and be thy punishment. [Exit.]

S C E N E II.

RHADAMISTUS *alone.*

But hear me—give me but at least some proof—
In whom shall I confide ? While Zopyrus
Proclaims Zenobia false, as firmly Ægle
Maintains the thoughts that drive my soul to
 madness,
Are light as empty dreams.—Immortal Gods !
Who now deceives me, Zopyrus or Ægle ?
Fell Jealousy ! thou tyrant of my heart,
Still, still thou say'st, “ ’tis Ægle that deceives
 thee.”

Ah ! wherefore, since I thus detest
The jealous fear that haunts my breast ;
Still must I feel the cruel pest,
 That rankles at my peace ?
What calm can e'er this heart regain ?
When every hour I strive in vain
To clear my doubts, but still retain
 Such doubts as never cease ?
[*as he is going he hears the voice of Zenobia ;*
 he stops to listen, then returns.

Zen. [within.] But whither do we go ?

Rhad. What voice is that ?

Or I'm deceiv'd, or 'twas my wife that spoke—

The

The sound was surely thence—now let me seek
her ;

And favouring Fortune smile upon my wishes !

*[while Rhad. goes out the way where he heard
the voice, Zen. and Zop. enter by another.]*

S C E N E III.

ZENOBIA, ZOPYRUS. RHADAMISTUS, *who enters
again unseen behind.*

Zen. *[entering.]* And yet I know not whither
thou would'st lead me.

Zop. Fear nothing : follow me.

Zen. *[aside.]* My heart presages
Some evil is at hand. *[stops.]*

Rhad. *[to himself.]* Behold her here,
And with her Zopyrus.—Awhile I'll listen,
And prove his truth. *[stands apart.]*

Zop. *[to Zen.]* What dost thou ? Come, Ze-
nobia,
I lead thee to thy husband.

Zen. When, O ! when
Shall we behold him ? Zopyrus, but now
Thou feign'dst him little distant.—Long, ah ! long
With thee I've stray'd in these bewildering paths,
And yet I see him not.

Zop. Thou hast him present.

Zen. My husband present!—O! immortal
Gods!

Say how—where is he?

Zop. I—I am thy husband.

Zen. Eternal Powers!

Rhad. [*apart.*] Ha!—let the traitor die—
No—let us first learn all th' extent of treason
His impious arts have plann'd.

[*about to draw his sword and discover himself;
he stops.*]

Zen. And hast thou thus,
Thus dar'd to address the wife of Rhadamistus?

Zop. I now address his widow.

Zen. Heavenly Powers!
Does not my husband live?

Zop. But now I sent him
To meet his certain death.

Rhad. [*apart.*] I burn with rage!

Zen. O! perjur'd traitor! Is it thus thou
keep'st
Thy plighted faith?

Zop. In what have I deceiv'd thee?

Zen. In what? And said'st thou not that Rha-
damistus,
Or Tiridates must, by doom severe,
Be made a wretched victim?

Zop. 'Tis most true.

Zen.

Zen. That I might one of these at choice elect,
And thou would'st to my tears ensure his safety?

Zop. Even so.

Zen. And did I not entreat thee then
To spare a husband's life?

Zop. Thou say'st it well:
I swore to obey thee, and to keep my oath,
Preserv'd for thee a spouse in—Zopyrus.

Rhad. [*apart.*] I can no longer hold.

Zen. O! wretched prince!
O! my betray'd, my murder'd Rhadamistus!

Zop. In vain thou call'st on him, who now re-
fides
Amongst the dead.

Rhad. [*discovering himself.*] Thou liest—he
lives, thou traitor!
To be thy punishment.

Zop. I am betray'd.

Zen. My life! my lord!

Rhad. Thou double traitor! thus—

[draws, and is about to attack him.]

Zop. Forbear, or by this hand Zenobia dies.

*[draws a dagger with his right hand and
seizes Zen. with his left, in act to strike her.]*

Rhad. [*stopping.*] What would'st thou do?

Zen. O! cruel, cruel fortune!

Rhad.

Rhad. I cannot curb the fury that impels me—
—Most impious wretch !

Zop. If thou but mov'st a step,
Zenobia's dead,

Rhad. What misery is mine !

Zen. O ! my lov'd spouse ! since Heaven re-
stores my fame,
Let not his threats affright thee—No, my blood
Shall from this bosom freely flow, if pure
The purple stream, my soul, from mortal bonds
Be gladly loos'd ; if loos'd, she leave behind
Without a blush, this chaste, un sullied frame.

Rhad. O ! dearest part of me ! O ! lively pattern
Of loyalty and truth—to find thee thus,
And in such hands !—O ! Zopyrus ! have pity !
If still thou bear'st a sense of human feelings,
Some remnant of the man—Restore my wife :
I never, never will exact revenge ;
I swear it here—forget, forgive thee all.

Zop. O ! no—I shall not trust thy plighted
faith—

Depart and leave me.

Rhad. By the immortal Gods——

Zop. Depart—or see her perish.

Rhad. Savage monster !

A fury worse than black Cocytus' fiends :

O ! let

O ! let me tear from that detested bosom—

[*advancing.*

Zop. Take heed—— [threatening *Zen.*

Rhad. O ! hold—Where art thou, Rhadamistus !

O ! give me counsel, Gods !—my wife !—thou traitor !

What torture do I feel !—At once my soul
Laments and raves—my heart is torn between
Contending pangs of tenderness and rage !

Zop. Zenobia, come with me——thou, Rhadamistus,

Unless thou mean'st to see her dead before thee,
Beware how thou pursu'st us.

Rhad. Pity now
Gives way in me to fury.

Zop. Come, Zenobia.

Zen. And does my lord forsake me thus ?

Rhad. O ! no——

Take this, thou wretch ! [about to attack him.

Zop. Then let her die. [about to stab *Zen.*

Rhad. O ! hold !

Yet, yet forbear.

S C E N E IV.

*Enter TIRIDATES,**Tir.* What would'st thou, impious slave?*[seizing him.**Zop.* O Heaven!*Tir.* Resign thy weapon.*[wrests the dagger from him.**Zop.* I am lost!*[he flies.**Rhad.* Perfidious traitor! vainly would'st thou
'scape me, *[Exit in a rage,*

S C E N E V.

ZENOBIA, TIRIDATES.

Zen. Ah! whither goest thou? Stay, my lord—*[going after Rhad,**Tir.* Ingrate!

So soon would'st thou forsake me?

Zen. Prince—O Heaven!

I begg'd of thee to shun me,

Tir. Ah! what mystery

Is hid beneath thy words?—I will obey—

But tell me, wherefore dost thou fly me thus?

Zen,

Zen. Thou wilt know all, and know it all too soon ;

Farewell.

[*going.*

Tir. Forgive me—I must follow.

Zen. No—

It cannot—must not be.

Tir. But now I saw thee
Threaten'd by ruffian force.—The hand that
threaten'd

I knew not, nor the hand that would have sav'd
thee,

I could not bear to leave thee thus alone,
Expos'd to certain peril.

Zen. Greater peril
Awaits me here with thee.

Tir. At least I may——

Zen. Leave me in peace—in pity grant my suit:
Life is your gift, with gratitude I own it ;
But wherefore make to me your gift unhappy ?

O ! let me now at least obtain
A momentary rest ;
Nor thus a war and storm again
Awaken in my breast.

A storm, in which my soul may rove,
And risk a spotless name ;

A war, in which the strife may prove
Destructive to my fame.

[*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E VI.

TIRIDATES alone.

I know not what Zenobia's words import,
Nor what myself intends.—She drives me from
her,
Yet tells not why.—There's something from that
lip
So sweetly sounds ; there's something on that brow
So awful shines, as ever must defend her,
And strike all censure dumb.

S C E N E VII.

Enter MITHRANES.

Mit. My lord, I bring
Most welcome tidings—Rhadamistus now
Is made your prisoner.

Tir. Ha ! and where, Mithranes ?

Mit. He came himself, unweeting, midst your
troops
To wear your ready chains.

Tir. Relate the whole.

Mit. In swift pursuit a flying warrior's steps
He follow'd, and with matchless boldness enter'd
Within your tents.—Against a thousand swords
That

That glitter'd round to oppose his furious passage,
Eager he fought the object of his vengeance.
At once he saw, o'ertook, and pierc'd his breast.

Tir. Unheard-of rashness !

Mit. Yet all is not told.

This done, he hop'd again to leave the valley,
And might have scap'd, but at his greatest need
His sword broke short, and left his hand defence-
less.

And still, though numbers round him countless
press'd.

With threatening arms, alone, without a weapon,
He scarcely deign'd to yield.

Tir. The wretch who fell
Beneath his rage was surely he, whom late
I here beheld.

S C E N E VIII.

Enter ÆGLE behind, unseen.

Mit. The life of Rhadamistus
Behold is in your hand.

Ægl. [*to herself.*] What do I hear ?

Mit. O ! let the traitor suffer for his crimes.

Tir. Then be it so—Mithranes, let us go.

[*going.*

Ægl.

Ægl. [*coming forward.*] Forbear, O ! prince,
forbear to vent your anger
On one whom cruel Fortune's frown pursues.

Tir. And what can urge thee to defend the life
Of this perfidious ?

Ægl. Yet I deem not, fir,
His guilt so certain.

Tir. But Zenobia's father
By treason he destroy'd.

Mit. And next the daughter
He sought to slay : for he, whose eyes beheld
The assassin's barbarous stroke, could not deceive
me.

Ægl. Think better yet.—We must not lightly
give
Our faith to common rumour.—With a foe
Mercy is ever lovely.

Tir. Tiridates
Might in oblivion sleep his private injuries,
But never can forgive Zenobia's wrongs :
To her his blood in sacrifice is due.

Ægl. Believe me, she requires not this.

Tir. Though she
Demand it not, her virtue claims it from me.

[*going.*

Ægl. Yet hold—O Heavens ! [*aside.*] Believe
what now I speak :

If

If thou canst love Zenobia, then respect
The life of Rhadamistus : headlong zeal
Would plunge thee deep in error ; thou would'st
serve

Zenobia's honour, and thou kill'st her peace.

Tir. Ha ! does she love him then ?

Ægl. Alas ! my lord,
She would—if more than this thou seek'st to know,
I must—Already have I said too much. [*aside.*

Tir. Thou seem'st confus'd—What can this
mean, Mithranes ?

A chilling damp—'tis true, that Rhadamistus
Was once my rival.—Now conceal'd he lurks
Amidst these woods, where too Zenobia dwells.
In her defence he stood, and she pursued
His flying steps ; but me she heeds no more :
Ægle has since declar'd.—O ! gentle nymph,
[*to Ægl.*

Whate'er thou know'st in pity now reveal.

Ægl. I can no further speak—Enough already
My lips have utter'd.

Tir. Ah ! what freezing hand
Weighs heavy on my heart ? What cruel doubts
Are these I feel ? My peace is lost for ever !

By proof I know the heart may bear
A beauty's cruel reign ;
But torments from a faithless fair
No lover can sustain.

If

If she I love my hope deceive,
 And all her vows forego,
 Ere I, ye powers ! this truth believe
 Let death conclude my woe ! [Exit.

S C E N E IX.

ÆGLE, MITHRANES.

Ægl. Unhappy prince ! O ! how my bosom feels
 For all his sufferings ! How that pleasing aspect,
 His eye's soft glance, the music of his words
 Command each heart to share with him in sorrow;
 A lover form'd like him, alas ! deserves
 Far other fate.—O ! that 'twere given to Ægle
 To make his days more happy !

Mit. Doubtless Ægle
 Displays a feeling mind, and Tiridates
 Is worthy all her pity : but such feeling
 Is warmer sure than mere compassion knows.

Thy looks, O ! gentle nymph, display
 The thoughts that now thy bosom sway ;
 Thine eyes, where beams of softness play,
 No inbred cruelty proclaim.
 Though yet unfetter'd in his snares,
 Thy soul to Love no hatred bears ;
 And modest pity oft prepares
 The virgin's heart to catch the flame. [Exit.

S C E N E X.

ÆGLE alone.

Ah me ! too true—My passion far exceeds
The bounds of pity—Hapless, hapless Ægle !
To what would'st thou pretend ? Thy thoughts
are rais'd
To objects far above thee.—Heaven has doom'd
A cottage for thy dwelling : quench such flames
As only suit the torch of splendid loves.
If this thou canst not do—at least suppress
The conscious fire within, and waste in silence.

What greater anguish can I feel ?
When he I love is nigh ;
I sigh, but ah ! I dare not tell
That 'tis for him I sigh.

My feeble powers no more suffice
My sufferings to sustain ;
Nor yet, alas ! my heart supplies
The courage to complain. *{Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E XI.

A garden belonging to the palace of the kings of Armenia, inhabited by TIRIDATES.

TIRIDATES, MITHRANES.

Mit. 'Tis all too true : too well you now conceive

The words of *Ægle*.—Yes, *Zenobia's* love
Is fix'd on *Rhadamistus* : when she heard
Your troops had made him prisoner, from her
cheek

The colour fled : with eager speed she flew
To reach the tents, and sought admittance to him,
But found access denied.

Tir. And yet, *Mithranes*,
I cannot, must not think——

Mit. By her you soon
Will find the truth confirm'd.—She comes to ask
Of you the prisoner's life.

Tir. O Heaven ! she dares not
Insult me thus.

Mit. Ere this she had preferr'd
To you her suit, but that two Roman warriors,
Who bring a written message from their camp,
Detain her now impatient on the way.

Tir.

Tir. She must not meet my eyes—O! no, th'
 ingrate,
I cannot bear her presence.

Mit. See, she comes.

S C E N E XII.

Enter ZENOBIA.

Zen. Ah! prince!

Tir. The mighty secret, Heaven be prais'd!
Is now disclos'd.—At length the powerful cause
Of all my wrongs is known.—What seek'st thou?
Speak:

Be not dismay'd—The worth of Rhadamistus
May plead excuse for every broken vow.
And com'st thou now to ask from me his freedom?
To ask him for thy spouse? Must Tiridates
Prepare the torches for thy happy nuptials?

Zen. My lord——

Tir. Inhuman, barbarous, false Zenobia!
Is this the recompense for love like mine?
And dost thou thus betray me? And for whom?
For whom betray me? Righteous Gods! for one
Whose murderous guile depriv'd thee of a father?
And then——

Zen. You are deceiv'd: false rumour fix'd
The guilt on him.

Mit. [*to Tir.*] 'Tis true.—By Pharasmanes
The deed was plann'd.—Perfidious Zopyrus
Confess'd it dying.

Tir. Wilt thou then believe
A traitor's words ?

Mit. A paper found upon him
Confirm'd the whole : in this are given at full
The secret orders for the monarch's death ;
All written by the hand of Pharasmanes.

Zen. Behold, my lord——

Tir. Be silent : while you plead
For Rhadamistus thus, your love condemns him.

Zen. 'Tis true, I love him, and attempt not now
To hide my love.—His danger brings me hither ;
Zenobia comes to give him liberty :
She comes from you to ask it.—Rome once more
Makes me the offer of Armenia's sceptre.
In my behalf behold from Syria march
The Latian bands : meantime the Armenians call
On thee to fill their throne.—Do thou consent ;
Zenobia here will second their design :
Restore to me in freedom Rhadamistus,
And rule Armenia's kingdom.

Tir. Surely mighty
For a new lover such a sacrifice.

Zen. But not, O prince ! too mighty for a husband.

Tir.

Tir. A husband !

Zen. I have said.

Tir. Can this be true ?

Such secret too from me till now conceal'd ?

Zen. I fear'd to excite your rage against my
confort ;

I fear'd your just affliction.—Know, my heart
'Too weak to witness such a fatal trial,
At least at distance——

Tir. Cruel and inconstant !
Ungrateful woman ! Whom shall we believe,
Or whom, Mithranes, trust ? All is deceit
We hear or see—Zenobia has betray'd me,
And truth is lost for ever !

Zen. Tiridates,
Think not 'twas I betray'd thee.—No, 'twas Heaven,
And 'twas a father's will oppos'd our nuptials.
I know not whether fear or hope induc'd
The cruel change : I know that thou wert absent,
And that this hand was destin'd to another.

Tir. And could'st thou then—

Zen. What power, alas ! was mine ?
“ Behold ” (he cried) “ the only way, my daughter,
“ To save my life, my kingdom and my honour.”
Now say, had Tiridates been as me,
What would he then have done ?

Tir. Have died, Zenobia.

Zen. I do far more—I part from thee and live :
Death would have only serv'd to render short
My time of suffering : I with mine had clos'd
Thy dearer life, and disobey'd a father.

Tir. Thy recent bands are little irksome to thee :
Well hast thou toil'd for Rhadamistus' safety,
And he has well secur'd thy heart.—I see
Report was false, that e'er he fought thy life.

Zen. O ! no, 'twas true ; but this can never
make
My bands more irksome.

Tir. How !—not irksome ?

Zen. No.

Tir. He fought thy life and thou canst love
him still ?
And love so firmly, that to ensure his safety
Thou offer'st in exchange a kingdom's rule.

Zen. Yes, Tiridates—could Zenobia less,
She must neglect her glory, stain the honours
Of all her ancestry ; forget the duty
A wife should cherish ; slight the immortal Gods,
That witness'd her espousals.—Thee, O ! prince,
Thou must Zenobia wrong : where would be then
The spotless innocence, the pride of soul
That charm'd thee once in her ? Say, should I
then
Have e'er been worthy Tiridates' love ?

Tir.

Tir. Alas ! what virtue fate has ravish'd from me !

Zen. If it indeed be true that love is born
Of minds congenial, wherefore with that virtue
Should now thy grief contend ? No—imitate,
Or rather, prince, surpass it—*Tiridates*
Can far outgo example.—Well I know
Thy constancy of temper.—Let us quit
The paths of vulgar lovers : let the sparks
Of emulation glow in either breast.
O ! think what we must feel when we review
Our glorious conquest ; while the world shall learn
That love, when cherish'd in a noble heart,
Can breed, and only breed the fruits of virtue.

Tir. Run—fly, *Mithranes*——to our presence
bring

In freedom *Rhadamistus*.—How thy words,
Exalted dame ! can change the mind at will !
Thou kindlest in my breast another flame
That quenches now the first,—I see with envy
The greatness of thy soul, and blush so long
To lag behind thee.—I perceive my heart
Is wholly chang'd : no more I love *Zenobia* ;
I worship, I adore her—If I love her,
A jealous lover of *Zenobia's* fame ;
A zealous follower of *Zenobia's* virtues :
I love her—as a mortal loves the Gods.

Zen. All thanks, protecting powers ! *Zenobia*
now

Has

Has not a foe : the greatest is subdued,
The thought of thy distress.—Go, prince, and
reign
(For thou art worthy) in Zenobia's stead.

S C E N E XIII.

Enter ÆGLE.

Ægl. O ! let me, dearest sister, clasp thee thus
Close to my breast. [embraces Zen.]

Zen. What means my gentle Ægle?
What dream is this?

Ægl. No longer am I Ægle :
Behold your lost Arfinöe.—See the mark
Of crimson here, on the left arm impress'd
Of all our race.

Zen. 'Tis true, by Heaven !

Tir. Ye powers !

Zen. In one short moment what a tide of bliss !
How knew'st thou this ? [to Ægl.]

Ægl. From him, the aged shepherd,
Till now believ'd my father.—Thrice five years
Have roll'd their course since from the Armenian
rebels

He had me then an infant ; and till now
Has kept me still the darling of his love :
But late he heard the fortunes of Zenobia,

And

And well he knows thee too, but not from me.
I kept my faith unbroken.—Whether now
Thy sufferings mov'd him ; or that verging near
The close of life, he was resolv'd again
To give me back the honours of my birth,
He call'd me to him, and with many a tear
Told all the tale, and sent me to Zenobia.

Zen. Well in thy face I read thy princely mind.

SCENE LAST.

Enter RHADAMISTUS.

Rhad. Ah ! Tiridates——

Tir. Come, my lord, O ! come :
Behold Zenobia here, thy long-sought wife,
I thus restore her to thee.

Rhad. [*to Zen.*] O ! forgive,
Forgive your Rhadamistus.

Zen. What offence
Awaits my pardon ?

Rhad. Heavens !—my jealous rage.

Zen. Your jealous rage was kindled in your
breast

From love's excess.—The cause I ever cherish,
Th' effect I have forgotten. [*embrace.*]

Tir. Heavenly goodness !

Zen.

Zen. [*to Tir.*] To me, O ! prince, the Gods
 restore a sister,
To whom I owe my life, and fain would shew
The gratitude she merits.—Well I know
She loves thee, Tiridates : let that hand,
Devoted once for mine, be given at least
At my request—bestow it on Arsinöe.

Tir. Receive it, princefs——[*gives his hand.*]
 What thou bid'st, Zenobia,
To me is ever sacred.

Ægl. Happy hour !

Rhad. O ! faithful spouse !

Zen. O ! generous Tiridates !

CHORUS.

'Tis false that Love, with tyrant sway
Bids every will his rule obey,
 And o'er our freedom reigns.
But lovers thus, while each pursues
His wayward course, would faults excuse
 Which Fate in them ordains.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

THEMISTOCLES.

T H E M I S T O C L E S.

PERSONS

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

XERXES, King of PERSIA.

THEMISTOCLES, an ATHENIAN General.

ASPASIA, Daughter of THEMISTOCLES.

NEQCLES, Son of THEMISTOCLES.

ROXANA, a Princess of the royal blood, in love
with XERXES.

LYSIMACHUS, Ambassador from the Greeks.

SEBASTES, Confidant of XERXES.

SCENE in the city of SUSA.

THEMISTOCLES.

ACT I. SCENE I

The palace of Xerxes.

THEMISTOCLES, NEOCLES.

Them. What would'st thou do ?

Neoc. Permit me to chastise
That haughty Persian,—seest thou not, my father,
How little he attends to thy demands ?
What further insults must we yet endure ?

Them. Restrain thy ill-tim'd ardour ? Thinkst
thou still

We tread the soil of Greece ; and that thou see'st
Thy father circled with the flattering crowds,
That ever throng to him whom Fortune favours ?
All things must change ; and, Neocles, the wise
Submit to present evils. See in this
The palace of our foe : no longer now
Am I the hope, the darling pride of Athens ;
A poor, a wandering exile, shunn'd of all,
An outcast of mankind, what have I left,
Save this, (the greatest good) I still retain
My constancy unshaken.

Neoc. Pardon, Sir,

Such

Such constancy I scarce with temper bear.
I see thee driven, excluded from those walls,
Which late thy blood preserv'd ; in every part
To find the hatred of thy cruel country
Pursue thee still, and with insidious policy,
Forbid thee an asylum. Malice seems
To grudge thee even a fostering spot of earth,
To feed the wants of nature ; yet I hear
No murmurs pass thy lips : I see thy looks
Unmov'd and placid. Is it possible ?
How canst thou thus support the unnatural stroke
Of man's ingratitude ?

Them. Alas ! my son,
Thou 'rt newly enter'd on the path of life,
And all to thee is strange : I blame thee not ;
For wonder is the child of ignorance,
And mother still of wisdom. Know the hatred,
Thou see'st in human breasts, is mostly found
The recompense of every good conferr'd ;
The ungrateful hate (and many such there are)
The galling weight of benefits in him
From whom they come ; while he, from whom
they come,
Loves, in the man he serves, the benefits
By him bestow'd ; and hence, my son, proceeds
My country's hate to me, my love to her.

Neoc. Were only men unjust to thee, my father,
I might support the thought ; but even the Gods
Seem mindless of thee.

Them.

Them. Mindless ?

Neoc. Can we call
This wretched state, thy virtue's due reward ?

Them. Of good or evil, know'st thou which to
name,
Reward or punishment ?

Neoc. What means my father ?

Them. By suffering, virtue is refin'd, but grows
Corrupt by prosperous fortune. Limpid flows
The stream midst broken rocks, but in a pool
Stagnates impure ; the weapon, that in war
Resplendent blazes, rusts in lazy peace.

Neoc. But thus to change from triumphs past
to meet
With trials such as these.

Them. Futurity
Perhaps may envy more my present trials,
Than all my former triumphs.

Neoc. Be it so :
But say, what cause has brought thee to this place,
In search of other perils ? Is the hatred
Of Greece so little ? Would'st thou stand expos'd
To Persia's fury ? Dost thou not remember
That Athens, when assail'd, led on by thee,
Oppos'd the united force of Asia's arms,
And scoff'd at Xerxes and his idle bridge ?
Ah ! think not that such transient anger swells
The heart of kings.—Here should'st thou be dis-

cover'd

To whom wilt thou recur ? In other parts
Thy foes are many, here thy foes are all.
Each, from thy counsels, has in battle lost
A friend, a relative, a son or father.
Ah ! let us fly, my lord—in pity—

Them. Peace :

Some one I see approaching—Leave me ; hence
And wait for me apart.

Neoc. And shall I not
Remain with thee, my father ?

Them. No : I dare not
Confide in thy forbearance ; and our state
Requires it much.

Neoc. And now——

Them. Obey.

Neoc. At least,
In such a dreadful tempest, O ! take heed
And guard thy safety.

Them. Hence and hope the best.

Neoc. And can I say, O ! fire belov'd !
That hope will e'er be mine ;
Or stars, that late have cruel prov'd,
Will now benignant shine ?

I dread the frowns of Fate severe
Against thy peace combin'd ;
But more than all her frowns I fear
Thy constancy of mind.

[*Exit.*
SCENE

S C E N E II.

ASPASIA, SEBASTES. THEMISTOCLES *apart*.

Them. [*aside.*] This stranger, by his looks and bearing, seems

Of high concern and manners more refin'd :
Of him I may enquire—but soft, what maid
With him appears ; and by her vests a Greek ?

Asp. [*to Seb.*] Yet hear me.

Seb. No ; I cannot, fair Aspasia,
Now longer here remain : the king expects me.
[*going.*]

Asp. Yet one short moment : is it true the king
Has made this cruel edict ?

Seb. 'Tis most true :
Whoe'er to Xerxes brings Themistocles,
Alive or dead, shall gain immense reward.

Asp. Unhappy father !
[*aside.*]

Them. [*to Seb.*] Tell me, gracious lord,
(If thus far may be known) can all alike
Presume to approach the feet of royal Xerxes,
And when and where such honour is permitted ?

Asp. [*aside.*] How shall I warn my father ?

Seb. [*to Them. haughtily.*] Hence and learn
From

From others what thou seek'st.

Them. If I perhaps
Have err'd unwitting, courteous deign to instruct
me ;

A stranger am I ; and to me unknown
The country's customs here.

Seb. Farewell, Aspasia.

[*Exit, without attending to Them.*]

Them. What senseless pride !

S C E N E III.

THEMISTOCLES, ASPASIA.

Asp. [*to herself.*] Conduct not, mighty Gods !
My father to these shores !

Them. [*aside.*] Then let me seek
Some better knowledge from this Grecian dame.
[*to her.*] Fair virgin, if the Heavens—Almighty
Powers !

What features do I see !

Asp. Eternal Gods !
'Tis sure my father, or some form like his !

Them. O ! say——

Asp. Themistocles !

Them. Aspasia !

Asp. Father !

Them.

Them. My daughter ! [embrace.

Asp. Fly, O ! fly——

Them. And dost thou live ?

Asp. Ah ! fly, my dearest father.—O ! what star
In evil hour has brought you to this palace ?

Ah ! Xerxes seeks your life, and vast rewards
Are promis'd him who brings you to his fight—
Alas ! delay not—some one may discover—

Them. Thou wilt thyself discover me, Aspasia,
With this excess of fear.—Say, when to Argos
I sent thee for a shelter from the dangers
Of war and tumult, was not then thy ship
Engulph'd in roaring waves ?

Asp. It was ; and none,
Save I alone, surviv'd the cruel wreck ;
By wondrous chance escap'd from stormy seas
To pay with liberty my ransom'd life.

Them. Say how was this ?

Asp. A vessel from the waves—
(O Heaven ! I freeze with terror !) from the waves
A hostile vessel took me, scarce alive,
And bore me prisoner to this fated land.

Them. Is here thy birth disclos'd ?

Asp. No.—Xerxes gave me
(My race unknown) a present to the princess,
The fair Roxana.—How I oft invoc'd
A father's name ! How oft I wearied Heaven

With vows to see him ! But I little thought
To find my vows so fatally fulfill'd.

Them. Compose thyself, my daughter ; joy and
grief
Are plac'd with bounds so near to each, the passage
Is but a moment's work. This day our fortune
May take a different aspect ; finding thee,
Already do I feel my sufferings less.

Asp. But how ! how have you found me here ?
A wretch,
In servile bonds ! And how are you arriv'd ?
A fugitive proscrib'd ! A lonely exile !
Alas ! my father, where is now the splendor
That once encircled you ? The pomp, the menials,
The wealth, the friends ?—O ! Deities unjust !
O ! most ungrateful Athens ! and does earth
Support thee still ? And still the thunder sleep
In Jove's eternal hand ?

Them. Forbear, Aspasia !
And learn, more wise, to keep thy grief in bounds ;
Know, she, who calls for vengeance on her country,
Can ne'er be daughter to Themistocles ;
Nor will I bear thou should'st one moment harbour
Such impious thoughts.

Asp. When you defend her cause,
Your country's guilt is doubled.

Them. Hold ! no more.

Asp.

Asp. Yet, let me beg you fly!—Ah! quit this land.

Them. Whence is thy dread, if here to all unknown—

Asp. To all unknown? And where! ah! where, is then

Themistocles unknown? The character
Of majesty impress'd upon his brow,
That speaks his soul, suffices to betray him.
This day the peril threatens more: from Athens
At Susa an ambassador arrives:
From him and from his followers, who shall now
Conceal——

Them. ——But tell me, know'st thou yet his
business,
And what his name?

Asp. I know not; but the king
Will give him speedy audience.—See already
Where yonder throng the impatient populace
To reach the destin'd place.

Them. May each that wills it
Be present at the meeting?

Asp. Doubtless each.

Them. Remain thou here: I haste to satisfy
A wish I long have cherish'd in my breast,
Thus face to face to meet my ancient foe.

Asp. Forbear——Unhappy me! What would
you do?

You kill me with affright ! O ! if you love me,
Forego the thought—By this unconquer'd hand,
On which, a trembling and a suppliant daughter,
I now impress the kifs of filial duty ;
Even by that country, which, to you a foe,
You still have reverenc'd ; which you have de-
fended,
Howe'er to you ungrateful.

Them. Lov'd Aspasia,
Come to thy father's breast : full well in these,
These fond emotions of an anxious daughter,
I read thy heart ; but sink not thus beneath
Thy birth and virtue.—Leave to me the care
To guard myself—Farewell ; and from thy father
Learn to despise the frowns of niggard Fortune.

Amidst the rage of adverse fate
He neither fear nor tumult knows,
Who, still prepar'd for every state,
A heart to all undaunted shows.

Those evils that attend on life
Are lessons to the noble mind ;
As from the winds and waves at strife
Their useful school the seamen find. [*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E IV.

Enter ROXANA.

Asp. [*to herself.*] Alas ! through all my trembling breast I feel
Each fibre shake with fear !

Rox. Permit me now,
Aspasia, to complain ; and why conceal
Thy happy fortune thus ? Though not a friend,
I hop'd at least to find thee more sincere.

Asp. [*aside.*] Alas ! she knows it all. Themistocles
Too surely is discover'd.

Rox. Thou art pale !
Thou answer'st not ? And have I truly heard,
And have I near me then my deadliest foe.

Asp. Ah ! princess !——

Rox. Peace, ingrate, to thee I told
My secret soul, to thee intrusted all;
And thou, mean time, hast us'd each art to win
From me the heart of Xerxes.

Asp. [*aside.*] What I fear'd
Employs not now her thoughts.

Rox. Is this, Aspasia,
The recompense for all my friendship shewn ?

Asp. Such taunts and insults ill become Roxana,
Possess

Possess, without a fear, the heart of Xerxes,
I never shall dispute it—no !—too well
I know myself ; think not Aspasia's hopes
(Beyond her rank) aspire to mount the throne.

Rox. Diffimulation all ! A thousand thoughts
Confirm my fears, since Xerxes first beheld thee,
I find a daily change, while cold indifference
Succeeds declining love. I mark his looks,
Intent on thee ; I hear his converse dwell
Too oft on thee ; and when I speak of love,
He seems confus'd ; then seeking an excuse
To veil his luke-warm passion, lays the blame
On all those cares that vex a monarch's peace.

Asp. Not love, but generous pity warms his
 breast,
For poor Aspasia's fortune.

Rox. Pity oft
Is but a specious name.

Asp. Reflect, Roxana,
How great the distance twixt myself and Xerxes.

Rox. Love equals those more distant.

Asp. But a stranger ?——

Rox. 'Tis that I fear. Sometimes the fancied
 value
Outweighs the true ; those gems are little worth
Where Nature heaps them with a lavish hand,
But from their scarceness oft are treasures deem'd.

Asp. For pity's sake, Roxana, be not thus
 Ingenious

Ingenious to your pain ? You wrong Aspasia,
You wrong yourself and Xerxes : if the cares
Of love can find admiffion in this breast,
(Midft all the fufferings of my prefent ftate)
Not Xerxes is their object. In this heart
Another form is grav'd ; and learn, Aspasia
Has not a heart that knows how love can change.
Rox. And wilt thou then——

S C E N E V.

Enter SEBASTES.

Seb. [*to Rox.*] If, princefs, you would fee
The Athenian envoy, he prepares to take
His audience of the king.

Rox. I come, Sebaftes.

Asp. Hear—know'ft thou yet his name ?

Seb. Lyfimachus.

Asp. [*afide.*] Eternal Powers ! 'tis he, my heart's
dear lord !

But wherefore comes he ? [*to Seb.*

Seb. As I learn, he comes
To fee Themiftocles.

Asp. [*afide.*] And is HE then,
Is then my lover too my father's foe ?
All, all the earth confpire in waging war
With one unhappy exile !

Rox.



Rox. Go, Sebaſtes,
Before me to the king—farewell Aſpafia.
[*to Aſp.*] Betray me not. [*Exit Sebaſtes.*

Aſp. Ah ! baniſh from your mind
Theſe jealous doubts ?—Ah ! how can thoughts
like theſe
E'er find admittance in a noble breaſt ?

Rox. A lover I ! too well I know ;
From jealousy what torments flow,
The bane that heightens every woe,
And poiſons every joy.
The monſter with an hundred eyes,
Creates the bad, the good belies,
And every cruel pang ſupplies,
To work the foul's annoy.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E VI.

ASPASIA alone.

Can this be true ! And is Lyſimachus,
Is he too leagu'd againſt a wretched father ?
O ! faithleſs man ! already he forgets me ;
He thinks me dead ; and thinks that to the dead
'Tis folly to be conſtant :—Cruel ſtars,
Midſt all my ſufferings this alone was wanting.
What

What maid, alas ! has ever seen
Her stars more adverse shine ?
What tender heart by fate has been
Condemn'd to pains like mine ?

My sighs succeed each other still :
One woe another breeds ;
And each succeeding grief I feel,
The former grief exceeds.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E VII.

*A magnificent place for public audience. A throne
on one side. View of the city at a distance.*

THEMISTOCLES, NEOCLES.

Neoc. My father, whither goest thou ? Still in
vain

I would divine thy purpose ; while I mark
Each look with fear, and think that every eye
Is fix'd alone on thee. Behold the guards !
The king is near at hand ; let us depart.

Them. Here, mingled with the crowd, we may
remain.

Neoc. Think of the danger, fir.

Them. No more !—be silent.

Neoc. [*aside.*] I tremble for th' event,

[*they retire to one side.*

S C E N E VIII.

Enter XERXES and SEBASTES with a numerous attendance.

Xer. Go, call before us
The ambassâdor from Greece ; he shall be heard.
[*a guard goes out.*

Sebastes, tell me, does Themistocles
Still hide him from my vengeance ? Have I then
In vain held forth such hope of high reward ?

Seb. He cannot long be hid : too many snares
Are laid for him to escape them.

Xer. While he lives
I cannot rest,—say, has he not beheld
The flight of Xerxes ? Midst the unnumber'd
ships,
With which oppress'd th' Ægean billows groan'd,
He knows, that chac'd by him, (O ! shame to
think !)

My life was trusted to a single bark,
Poor and defenceless ; that, by thirst constrain'd,
I drank the scanty water, foul and putrid ;
And prais'd with eager lips, the favoury draught ;
And shall he live, who lives to boast of this ?
O ! no !—it ne'er shall be, and in my heart
The thought alone is madness.

[*ascends the throne.*

Neoc.

Neoc. [*aside to Them.*] Hear you this ?

Them. I do !

Neoc. Then let us fly.

Them. Peace, Neocles.

S C E N E IX.

Enter LYSIMACHUS *with a train of* Greeks.

Lyf. Great king ! in whom, though in a foe to
Greece,

Athens not only pays the honours due
To regal majesty, but, from thy virtue
(Unbounded as thy empire) now expects
A gift beyond the noblest.

Xer. Let it not
Be peace thou seek'st :—then fit and freely speak.

Neoc. [*to Them.*] Is that Lyfimachus ?

[*Lyf. fits.*]

Them. It is ?

Neoc. The friendship
Of one so dear, may stand you much in stead.

Them. [*to Neoc.*] Be silent or depart.

Lyf. [*to Xer.*] To sweep from earth
A rash disturber of the public peace
One common interest claims from all that rule ;
Even foes should here concur : the single state
That shelters one proscrib'd, must injure all ;

For

For hope of an asylum ever tempts
The mind to each excess. Themistocles,
(Forgive me, hapless friend!) is now the criminal
That Athens seeks. Within these palace walls
'Tis thought he dwells; she could of right demand him,

But rather asks him as a gift from Xerxes.

Neoc. [*aside.*] O! cruel embassy? O! faithless friend!

Them. [*aside.*] O! loyal citizen!

Xer. We shall not now,
Ambassador, explore the secret purpose
That hither turn'd thy steps, nor what our trust
Due to the Grecian faith; but this I know,
Not all thy studied artifice of speech
Can hide the boldness of a claim like this.
Say, what imports to me the peace of Athens?
Must I be made the power subservient here
To do your bidding? Who shall thus presume
To frame new leagues to bind contending foes?
And com'st thou now to give me laws or counsel?
The last I little trust, the first I spurn.
Let not a single victory swell you thus
With transient pride; for know, the fate of Greece
Is little yet secur'd; and know, to Athens
The way lies open still for Xerxes' arms.

Lyf. But what imports to you Themistocles?

Xer. Learn that, when Xerxes finds him in his
power—

Lyf.

Lyf. And dwells he not in Susa?

Xer. Were it so,
Of him I hold no conference with thee.

Lyf. My lord, your hatred of the Grecian name
Blinds you too far, and if I now begin
On peaceful terms——

Xer. No more : I have forbid thee
To speak of peace.

Lyf. 'Tis true ; but yet—

Xer. Enough :
I know what thou would'st say, and have reveal'd
To thee my thoughts at full—thou may'st depart.

Lyf. I go ; but since so little weighs
With thee the name of friend ;
Think not a boast can win the praise,
That must on deeds depend.

Foes may be felt, though lightly priz'd,
As Asia late has tried ;
Foes, that the more they seem'd despis'd .
Have dangers more defied.

[*Exit with train.*]

SCENE

S C E N E X.

XERXES, SEBASTES. THEMISTOCLES *and* NEO-
CLES *apart. Attendants.*

Xer. The Greeks, Sebaſtes, think Themiftocles
Is now in Perfia—Loſe not then a moment
To explore the truth, and eaſe thy anxious maſter,
This victim can alone appeaſe the hatred
That preys upon me and conſumes my peace.

Neoc. [*aſide.*] And yet my father flies not.

Them. Now's the time
To make the trial.

[*making his way through the guards.*]

Neoc. [*aſide to him.*] Hear me, O ! my father.

Them. [*before the throne.*] Great king.

Seb. What means this frenzy? Madman, hence!
Guards, take him from the preſence.

Them. Human prayers
Offend not even the Gods.

Seb. Away !

Xer. Not ſo :
He ſhall be heard.—What would'ſt thou, ſtranger ?
Speak.

Them. I ſeek a ſhelter here from adverſe For-
tune,
And only Jove or Xerxes can protect me.

Xer.

Xer. Who art thou ? Say.

Them. At Athens was I born.

Xer. And dar'st thou then, a Greek, appear
before me ?

Them. Yes, Xerxes, though full well I know
that name

Is here a crime ; but now a mighty service
Absolves in me that crime.—Themistocles
Thou seek'st, and him I here conduct before thee.

Xer. Themistocles ? Can this be true ?

Them. With kings
What lips shall utter falsehood ?

Xer. Such high service
No recompense can answer.—Where, O ! where
Is this long-sought-for object of my hatred ?

Them. He stands before your sight.

Xer. Where is he ?

Them. I—
I am Themistocles.

Xer. Thou !

Them. I am he.

Neoc. [*aside.*] Where shall I hide me ? [*Exit.*

Xer. Dost thou fear so little
To meet my just resentment ? Dar'st thou thus—

Them. Hear me, and then determine.—See be-
fore thee

Capricious

Capricious Fortune's sport.—In me, O ! king,
 Behold that same Themistocles who shook
 So late thy throne, who now resorts to thee
 For succour and support.—He knows thee mighty,
 Nor is he yet to learn a foe's resentment
 Enkindled long against him ; yet the hope
 To find in thee a guardian and protector
 Conducts him hither.—In thy virtue, king,
 He thus confides.—Behold me in thy hand,
 'Tis thine to save me, or 'tis thine to take
 A wish'd revenge.—If love of noble fame
 Glows in thy breast, behold an ample field
 For virtue worthy thee : subdue thyself,
 And stretch thy hand to raise a prostrate foe.
 If hatred sway thee, pause a moment yet :
 What praise to conquer unresisting weakness ?
 How useful to acquire a faithful friend.
 Think that thou art a king, and think that here
 Thou see'st an exile who confides in thee,
 And came a willing victim to this land ;
 Reflect, and calmly then decide my fate.

Xer. [*aside.*] Ye righteous Gods ! was ever
 known a foul

More firm and more unshaken ! What intrepid,
 What unexampled virtue ! Thus alone,
 Disarm'd, an enemy, to stand before
 The face of Xerxes ! Thus in confidence—
 O ! 'tis too much—[*to Them.*] Tell me, Themis-
 tocles,

What

What would'st thou ? With my hatred make my
glory

Dispute the victory ?—O ! now at least
Thou shalt not conquer.—Let me clasp thee then
Close to my breast : whate'er thou hop'st is thine ;
Take what thou wilt.—My treasures shall be open'd

[descends from his throne and embraces Them.]

To give thee aid ; my kingdom shall be arm'd
For thy defence ; and from this happy hour
Themistocles and Xerxes are the same.

Them. O king ! but now my hopes appear'd excess,
And yet thy generous heart out-goes them all :
What can I offer then ? My toils, my blood,
My life ? For such transcendent grace bestow'd,
My life, my blood, my toils were worthless all.

Xer. Be thou my recompense ; Themistocles
Is Xerxes' friend.—Yes, our contention still
Shall not have end ; though here I cast aside
All hatred for my injuries of old,
I mean with thee to wage a nobler war.

Do thou consent, a nobler part
Hereafter each may prove ;
Since glory now in either heart
Has hatred chang'd to love.

Thy former enmity forget ;
My vengeance I resign :
Do thou support my regal feat,
Thy safety shall be mine. *[Exit attended.]*

S C E N E XI.

THEMISTOCLES *alone.*

How oft, unstable Fortune, dost thou shift
Thy aspect thus ; and vainly now would'st tempt
me

To trust thy treacherous seeming.—No : too oft
I've prov'd thy smiles and frowns : thy favour still
I little heed, and hold thy wrath in scorn.

Uncertain Fortune ne'er beguiles,
Nor lures me with her harlot-smiles,
Nor warms with hope nor chills with fears.
I know that oft in vernal bowers
The serpent glides amidst the flowers ;
I know that oft in midnight hours
We praise a star, when none appears.

[*Exit.*]

S C E N E XII.

ASPASIA *alone.*

Where am I ? Who will now, ah ! hapless maid,
Shew me my father ? Here in vain I seek him,
Yet self-discover'd here but now he stood
Before the king—so Neocles declar'd :
He could not be deceiv'd.

SCENE.

S C E N E XIII.

Enter ROXANA.

Ah ! princess, hear,
In pity hear me, and protect my father
From angry Xerxes' vengeance.

Rox. Say'st thou ?—Father ?

Asp. O ! yes—behold in me, immortal powers !
The wretched daughter of Themistocles.

Rox. In thee ? Can this be possible ?

Asp. No more
It aught avail's to keep my birth conceal'd.

Rox. [*aside.*] Alas ! my rival now has stronger
charms.

Asp. Go, generous princess, plead, implore his
pardon.

Rox. Pardon for him ? Then sure thou know'st
not all.

Asp. I know my father here to angry Xerxes
Disclos'd himself : my brother, who in vain
Oppos'd his purpose, fled in terror hence.
He saw me since, and from his trembling lips
I heard the fatal truth.

Rox. Now learn the rest :
Know then——

S C E N E XIV.

Enter SEBASTES.

Seb. Aspasia, hasten ; Xerxes now
Requires your presence ; for Themistocles
Has own'd you for his daughter : never yet
The king appear'd to hear more grateful tidings.

Rox. [*aside.*] Death to my hopes !

Asp. [*aside.*] O Heaven !—Is then his hatred
Rooted so deep in Xerxes ?

Seb. Hatred ? No :
Themistocles is now his only joy.

Asp. What do I hear, Sebastes ! 'Twas but now
He fought his death.

Seb. And now, with all the warmth
A friend can feel, he clasps him to his breast ;
Calls him his life ; directs all eyes to him,
And only speaks of his Themistocles.

Asp. Farewell Roxana—O ! the heart-felt rap-
ture !

Th' excess of joy which now I find
Becomes a pleasing pain ;
A joy like this my suffering mind
Might long have hop'd in vain.

With

With Fortune's smiles my foul appears
So rapt in bliss extreme ;
I tremble still with anxious fears
Lest all should prove a dream. [Exit.

S C E N E XV.

ROXANA, SEBASTES.

Seb. [*aside.*] Take courage, heart, and hope,
since jealousy
Has touch'd Roxana's breast.

Rox. What means, Sebastes,
The impatience shewn by Xerxes now to seek
The converse of Aspasia ?

Seb. What suspicion
His thoughts suggest, Sebastes fears to speak.

Rox. And wherefore ? Freely speak.

Seb. To me it seems
That Xerxes loves her : when he heard her birth,
A sudden pleasure brighten'd in his features,
And told the secret workings of his heart.

Rox. O ! no—it cannot be—'tis but a dream
Thy fancy shapes.

Seb. Heaven grant it prove no other !
But yet 'tis ever well to fear the worst.

Rox. Ye powers ! Should this be true what
course befits

Roxana

Roxana then ?

Seb. What course ? To seek revenge.
What may not beauty such as yours achieve ?
'Tis joy to punish a perfidious lover.

Rox. Revenge at first may yield a short relief,
But ne'er can recompense our hopes destroy'd.

Amidst a thousand hearts to choose
A heart in whom our hopes repose ;
Yet there betray'd, our peace to lose,
Is sure the worst of human woes.

You best can tell, whose bosoms know
The pangs from faithless lovers found :
Of all afflictions felt below,
Misfortune gives no deeper wound. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E XVI.

SEBASTES *alone.*

Heaven smiles upon me, since Aspasia now
In Xerxes finds a lover, and repentment
Has warm'd Roxana's breast.—The care be mine
To cherish love in Xerxes, and in her
To increase the jealous fury.—Should she once
Be rous'd to wish revenge, I then may risk
A deed of high import.—My numerous friends
With her's united soon might make Sebastès
Even fear'd by Xerxes.—To the Persian throne
I may

I may perhaps—Who knows?—'Tis true I own
That hope is ever daring ; but we find
That fortune and that boldness oft unite.

Though rash was he who durst explore
The threatening waves unplough'd before,
And fought to find a distant shore.

In regions long unknown :
Yet had the sailor ne'er defied
With venturous oar the roaring tide,
What treasures still, in lands untried,
Had ne'er been made our own. [Exit.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II. S C E N E I.

*A magnificent apartment destined for THEMISTOCLES.
Vases with gold and jewels.*

THEMISTOCLES *alone.*

Behold thy fortune chang'd ! Behold thy station,
How different now, Themistocles ! But late
Oppress'd with every want ; thou soughtst in vain
The shelter of a cottage : now posses's'd
Of this rich dwelling, blazing round with pomp
Of wealth and splendor : Thou behold'st in heaps
Unbounded treasures : to thy will subjected,
A kingdom and a king. Upon the stage
Of this vain world, who knows what part may next
Themistocles be thine : too well I see
That human life, at best, is but a tale ;
And mine as yet unfinish'd,

S E C N E II,

Enter NEOCLES,

Neoc. Once again
Father belov'd, on innocence and virtue
The stars propitious shine : from every danger
We now are freed. When Athens shall receive
These wondrous tidings, how will terror shake
Her

Her citizens ungrateful ! Now begins
Our fortune's happy course : I see it all.
And now, with thee, I seem to reap my part
Of wealth and honours, share with thee the praise
Of palms and triumphs ; pass Alcides' bounds,
And conquer kings and give to kingdoms laws.

Them. Hold, Neocles ; and trust not yet too far
Our present state. Thy ardour now exceeds,
As late thy fear ? When adverse winds prevail'd,
Thou trembledst near the port ; and now they shew
A moment's favouring change, at once, my son,
Thou open'st all thy canvas to the breeze,
Ill tim'd in both. Thy confidence of soul
Is now a fault, but then had been a virtue :
And that distrust, which once so far depress'd thee,
Was then a fault, but would be virtue now.

Neoc. And what have we to fear ?

Them. In what to trust ?
These treasures ? These a moment has bestow'd,
A moment may resume them. In the friends
Thou saw'st me late acquire ? These are not mine,
They come with Fortune, and with her depart.

Neoc. But royal Xerxes' favour will suffice
To make our state secure.

Them. And Xerxes' anger,
Suffice to be our ruin.

Neoc. No : the king
Is far too wise and just.

Them.

Them. A king so great,
Beholds not all himself, too oft deceiv'd
When wicked men besiege the royal ear;
And wicked men abound in every clime.

Neoc. Thy virtue still must make thee rise above
The calumny of courts.

Them. O ! no, where each
Attempts o'er all to make his merits shine,
The virtue, most admir'd, is least secure.

Neoc. What then remains ?—

Them. Depart—The king approaches.

Neoc. In all thy words what magic seems conceal'd !

But now I thought us blest'd, and now I fear,
A thousand perils. In a few short moments,
All, all to me assumes a different form.

Before the pleas'd spectator's eyes
Thus various forms successive rise,
Which oft the mimic stage supplies,
With every art bestow'd.

A prison, dark as dreary night,
Becomes a palace fair and light ;
And groves of verdure cheer the sight,
Where late the billows flow'd.

[*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E III.

Enter XERXES.

Xer. Themistocles.

Them. Great king.

Xer. I still am bound
To thee in grateful ties, and owe thee much.
I promis'd recompense to him who brought
Themistocles to Persia. I have now
My utmost wish, and with impatience come
To make my promise good.

Them. So many gifts
Already lavish'd—shall not these suffice?

Xer. No, every recompense too little seems
For such a friend obtain'd, as swells my heart
With generous pride.

Them. And means——

Xer. I mean to amend
The injuries of Fortune, and to raise thee
In her despite. Miontes, Lampfacus,
The city, wash'd by fair Meander's stream,
Are from this instant thine : hereafter Xerxes
Will give more shining proofs to mark the love,
With which he justly honours thy deserts.

Them. O ! fir, be moderate ; use not thus your triumph,
Nor call my blushes forth : what have I done
That thus from you may claim——

Xer. What hast thou done ?
And dost thou think it little to confide
In Xerxes' generous faith ? To intrust with him
A life like thine ? To open him a field,
Will make his name immortal ? To restore
To Persia's kingdom in Themistocles,
In him alone, whate'er before was lost.

Them. Reflect, from me, what ruin, blood——

Xer. The glory
To honour thus the virtue of my foe,
Compensates all : the first was Fortune's work,
And Fortune's blame——this glory is my own.

Them. O ! generous sentiments ! that well besit
The substitute of Jove. Oh ! happy land,
To such a king subjected.

Xer. Hear me further.
I mean to follow now the grateful contest
Of mutual friendship. To my power thy life
Thou hast intrusted ; to thy valour I
Intrust my power. Thou shalt be sovereign
leader
Of Persia's armies : come, and take before
The assembled troops, the ensign of command,
Thou first shalt hence to punish the presumption

Of

Of restless Egypt. Greater deeds we then
May hope to achieve : with thee, Themistocles,
I trust to triumph o'er the world in arms.

Them. And will my generous king so far——

Xer. Away,
Prepare for other triumphs. Let thy deeds
Speak what thou mean'st to say.

Them. Benignant Powers !
Preserve for me a prince so like yourselves,
O ! let me still remember all his goodness,
For Xerxes triumph or for Xerxes die.

I seem to hear, with loud alarms,
The trumpet's wakening breath,
That calls me forth for thee in arms
To encounter fields of death.

Undaunted let me meet my fate,
And view, with fearless eye,
My tomb prepar'd, but ne'er ingrate
To thee, my king, I'll die.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E IV.

XERXES alone.

'Tis ever true : a regal diadem
Is heavy to support, and with it brings
A thousand troubles ; but the power it gives
To recompense the good, set virtue free

From

From the blind empire of capricious Chance ;
To make the worthy happy ; is a privilege
Atones for all, and opens to the soul
The purest joys of frail humanity ;
And (if a mortal boast may thus presume)
Can make a monarch equal to a God.
Such have I prov'd it, since the day in which
I gain'd Themistocles ? It now imports me
To make this gain secure. I mean to raise
Aspasia to the throne : her birth, her virtue,
Her beauty well deserve it. In my empire
Themistocles will then assert the rights
Of all his future offspring, whilst the ties
Of blood shall make our mutual love increase.
Yet would I first consult Aspasia's heart :
Already, at my will, Sebaſtes goes
To ſound her ſecret purpoſe. But as yet,
I ſee him not return—perchance he's here,
O ! Heavens !—It is Roxana !—let me now
Avoid her preſence, *[going.]*

S C E N E V.

Enter ROXANA.

Rox. Whither goes my lord ?
Do you then fly me !

Xer. No ! but other cares
Of high concernment call me now away.

Rox.

Rox. And yet amongst those cares Roxana once
Has borne a part.

Xer. But now they claim me wholly.

Rox. 'Tis true, and well I understand thee,
Xerxes.

I see how far Themistocles must now
Employ thy thoughts; and just it seems, a guest
So noble should engross the heart of Xerxes.
Thy mind (nor strange I deem it) is perplex'd
Between the father's merits and——

Xer. No more——

Princess, farewell.

[*going.*]

Rox. Yet, hear me, cruel man!

Xer. [*aside*] She must be undeceiv'd, [*to her*]
——attend Roxana;

'Tis time I should to thee disclose my thoughts.
Know then——

S C E N E VI.

Enter SEBASTES.

Seb. My lord, the Ambassador from Greece
Once more demands an audience.

Xer. Wherefore, say?
Then is he not departed?

Seb. No, he learns
That here Themistocles resides in Susa,

And

And means to make large offers to obtain him.

Xer. O ! 'tis too much ; he trifles with my patience :

I will not hear him—charge him to depart,
Nor dare to disobey me. [Seb. *going.*

Rox. [*aside.*] This resentment,
Alas ! proceeds from love.

Xer. Yet hear, Sebastes ;
I've better thought—Go, bring him to our presence,

I'll punish his presumption. [Exit Seb.

Rox. Speak at length
Your secret purpose.

Xer. 'Tis no longer time. [going.

Rox. You promise, Xerxes, first to tell me all,
Then, cruel man ! you answer not, but leave me.

Xer. Alas ! when speechless I depart,
Could'st thou, Roxana, read my heart,
My thoughts would then unfolded lie.
For oft we seem but to conceal
Those truths which looks too well reveal,
When silence only makes reply. [Exit.

Rox. In vain, alas ! I would deceive myself.
Aspasia triumphs—but behold she comes,
The haughty fair-one.

SCENE

S C E N E VII.

Enter ASPASIA.

[*looking at Asp. with attention.*] Where's the
mighty charm
That thus in her my Xerxes so adores?

Asp. At length, Roxana, all your doubts are
ended.

Rox. [*aside, looking at her.*] I cannot find a cause
for chains so binding.

Asp. What dost thou?—Wherefore gaze in
silence on me?

Rox. I seek the wonders of that face,
Those powerful eyes, and every grace,
That risk a king's repose.

A lover whom such charms assail,
Must find excuse if e'er he fail

In faith of former vows. [*Exit.*

Asp. What harsh reproaches! Tyrant Jealousy,
How dost thou torture hearts! I too, O Heaven!
Have prov'd no less for my Lyfimachus.

Asp. Then add to this, what yet thou hast not learn'd,

And further know—for thee I live no more.

Lyf. Ah ! wherefore thus transfix my bleeding heart ?

Asp. So true a lover and so firm a friend
Must merit sure from me a tender greeting.
And hast thou dar'd, ingrate ! my father's foe,
To meet Aspasia now and speak of love ?

Lyf. Thy father's foe ? Alas ! thou little know'st
The conflict that I feel.—A sacred duty
Compels me to obey my country's mandates ;
While every moment, in my tortur'd breast,
The lover with the citizen contends.

Asp. Thou must relinquish one.

Lyf. Ah ! one I cannot,
And one I ought not.—Every hour I strive,
With agonizing pangs, against my peace,
And seek to gain what, gain'd, must make me
wretched.

Asp. The Heavens be prais'd ! thou yet hast
nothing gain'd.

Lyf. Alas ! Aspasia, I have gain'd too much.
Forgive me, O ! ye guardian Gods of Athens !
If to her griefs I pay this tender sigh.

Asp. I tremble—speak—say, what hast thou
obtain'd ?

Lyf. The king gives up Themistocles to Greece.

Asp. Wretched Aspasia !

Lyf. Even this very hour
He plights his word to send him hence.

Asp. O Heavens !

[*aside.*] Ah ! Xerxes thus will punish my refusal.
[*to Lyf.*] Lyfimachus, have pity ! Thou alone
Canst save my father.

Lyf. O ! what power is mine ?
Perhaps already may the king expect me,
Where now the people and the troops are met.
Before them all he means to render up
The victim to my hands.—O ! think what power
Can rest with me.

Asp. All, if thou wilt, is thine :
Consent that by a secret flight——

Lyf. Aspasia,
What would'st thou ask ?

Asp. I from a lover ask
A certain proof of love : thou canst not sure
Reject my prayer.

Lyf. Alas ! before I lov'd
My duty was prescrib'd by other laws,
A citizen of Athens.

Asp. Does the name
Of citizen compel thee to pursue
A guiltless exile ?

Lyf. O ! I seek it not :

I but

I but fulfil my duty.

Asp. Be it so :

We have our several duties—this is mine.

Farewell for ever !

[*going.*

Lyf. Whither, whither goest thou ?

Asp. I go to Xerxes' arms,

Lyf. What says Aspasia ?

Asp. Yes, Xerxes loves me, and to assist a father
All nature pleads within me,—Ere I lov'd
My duty was prescrib'd by other laws,
The daughter of Themistocles.

Lyf. Yet hear me.

Give not the world, Aspasia, this example
Of broken faith.

Asp. I follow where thou lead'st,
And but fulfil my duty.

Lyf. Does the struggle
So little cost thee ?

Asp. Little cost ? Then learn
To thy confusion, 'tis to punish me
That Xerxes gives my father : but even now
He sent to offer me his hand and throne ;
And she, to whom it little costs to leave thee,
Has, for thy sake, refus'd the Persian throne.

Lyf. What say'st thou, O ! my love ?

Asp. Nor is this all.

Hear, cruel man ! thou know'st I've many a cause,
And

And yet I cannot hate thee : now reduc'd
To this extreme, to part from thee for ever,
I feel my heart divided from my breast.
I should conceal my weakness—but in vain,
In vain I strive—Behold, ungrateful man !
In spite of all, my tears will find a way.

Lys. Ah ! weep not thus—I yield—What have
I said ?

Farewell, my life, farewell !

Asp. And whither goest thou ?

Lys. I fly from trials which my virtue fears.

Asp. If any spark of pity yet remain—

Lys. No more—I dare not trust my wavering
duty.

What magic power the fair attends,
Who lost in grief appears ;
What then the sternest heart defends
From lovely eyes in tears ?

I fly, my love, an exile hence ;
If still with thee I stay,
No more my virtue makes defence,
Nor Athens I obey.

[*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E IX.

ASPASIA *alone.*

Then all my hope that now remains, is this,
To give my hand to Xerxes.—O ! Aspasia,
What grief, ye Powers ! what cruel fate is thine.

The heart that gentle love retains,
Must mourn when doom'd with other chains
Of tyrant bondage to comply.
Life is not life in such a state,
Compell'd to yield to vows we hate,
And pity, where we love, deny. [*Exit.*

S C E N E X.

*A magnificent pavilion, open on all sides ; a throne
on the right hand adorned with military ensigns.
View of a vast plain, with the Persian army
drawn up.*

XERXES, SEBASTES. *A train of Satraps, Guards
and People.*

Xer. Sebastes, is it true ? Does then Aspasia
Reject my proffer'd nuptials ?

Seb. Every beauty
Is coy when first we woo : perhaps in secret
Aspasia

Aspasia may have felt an equal passion,
But blushes to confess; and only waits
A father's sanction to declare her love.

Xer. That sanction soon——

Seb. Behold the illustrious exile;
And with him comes the ambassador of Athens.

Xer. Sebastes, see that now to me be brought
The ensign of command.

*[Xerxes ascends the throne, Seb. stands next him,
and one of the Satraps brings the staff of mili-
tary command, with which he stands near the
throne.]*

S C E N E XI.

*Enter THEMISTOCLES with LYSIMACHUS.—LY-
SIMACHUS, as he advances, speaks to THEMIS-
TOCLES, not heard by XERXES.*

Lys. Alas! my friend,
To what a cruel task has Heaven assign'd me!
How must I blush——

Them. And wherefore should'st thou blush?
Themistocles can judge between the friend,
And citizen of Athens: well he knows
Our country is the Deity, to which
Must all be sacrific'd.—Were I as you,
Themistocles had been Lysimachus.

Xer.

Xer. Draw near. Themistocles : See here assembled

The bravest, chosen troops of Persia's host :
To these selected warriors only wants ,
A general worthy them : that charge be thine.
Take this, and with this ensign I elect thee
Their chief and leader.—In my stead, dispense
Rewards and punishments.—Go, fight and conquer :

To thee I trust my fame and Persia's fate.

Lyf. [*aside.*] The king has then deceiv'd me,
or Aspasia

Has found the means to appease him.

Them. [*receiving the staff.*] Mighty king !
Confiding in your goodness I accept
The weight of this high charge, and here I swear
Eternal faith.—The Gods decree that Fortune
For thee may ever combat on my side !
Or should the stars forebode disastrous chance,
Themistocles be doom'd, and he alone,
To meet their anger : let the squadrons conquer,
And let him perish !—So may Xerxes see,
Return'd with laurel, not with cypress wreaths,
Amidst his conquering bands their leader slain.

Lyf. Is this the way, O ! Xerxes, that to Athens
You give Themistocles ?

Xer. I only swore
To send him back to Greece.—Then hear if now
I shall

I shall fulfil my promise——[*to Them.*] Valiant chief!

At length I mean to punish this presumption.

Another may conduct our arms in Egypt:

Be thou my scourge in Greece.—Go, burn, destroy,

Spread desolation; heap our galling chains

On Sparta, Corinth, Argos, Thebes and Athens.

Them. [*aside.*] Now am I lost!

Lys. And was I call'd——

Xer. Go, bear

These glorious tidings to thy countrymen;

Say how their exile will revisit Greece,

And what companions on his steps attend.

Lys. [*aside.*] O! my unhappy country! false
Aspasia! [*Exit with Greeks.*]

S C E N E XII.

XERXES, THEMISTOCLES, SEBASTES.

Them. [*aside.*] Themistocles a traitor!

Xer. What employs

Our general's thoughts?

Them. Ah! change, my king, your purpose;
For many nations yet are unsubdued.

Xer. If first I trample not on hostile Greece,
The conquer'd world can give me little pride.

Them.

Them. Reflect again——

Xer. Already 'tis determin'd ;
And he who dares oppose this enterprize
Encounters my resentment.

Them. Then elect
Some other leader.

Xer. Wherefore ?

Them. At the feet
Of Xerxes I lay down this honour'd ensign
Of Persia's high command.

[lays down the staff at the foot of the throne.]

Xer. What can this mean ?

Them. And would'st thou have Themistocles a
rebel
To o'erturn his native walls ?—Misfortune never
Can change me thus.

Seb. [*aside.*] What unexampled daring !

Xer. Not Athens now, this palace is thy coun-
try :
The first proscribes thee and pursues thy life,
The last receives, defends and gives thee being.

Them. Whoe'er defends me, I was born at
Athens,
And 'tis by nature's instinct that we cherish
Our dear paternal feats.—In forest glooms
The savage beasts will love their native caves.

Xer.

Xer. [*aside.*] I burn with rage——[*to him.*]

Then Athens still remains

The mistress of thy heart? But what in her
Can still Themistocles so highly prize?

Them. All, sovereign lord! the ashes of our
fathers,

The sacred laws, the tutelary Gods,
The language, manners, my repeated toils
For her endur'd; the honours heap'd upon me;
The very air, the trees, the soil and walls.

Xer. Ingrate! and dost thou thus before my
face [*descends from his throne.*]
Thus proudly boast a love so hateful to me?

Them. I still am—Xerxes—

Xer. Thou art still my foe:
In vain, with benefits conferr'd, I strove—

Them. These in my heart for ever fix'd remain
In characters indelible.—Let Xerxes
Point out his other foes: for him my blood
Shall freely flow; but if he still would hope
To employ my courage for my country's ruin,
With rebel arms, then Xerxes is deceiv'd:
For her I've ever liv'd, for her will die.

Xer. No more—reflect—resolve—thou canst
not live
The guard of Athens and the friend of Xerxes.
—Choose as thou wilt.

Them.

Them. Thou know'st my choice.

Xer. Remember :

This moment seals thy fate.

Them. Too well I know it.

Xer. Thou anger'st him whose power can make
thee wretched.

Them. But not a rebel.

Xer. 'Tis to me, thy life
By me preserv'd, is due.

Them. But not my honour.

Xer. Greece hates Themistocles.

Them. But Greece I love.

Xer. [*aside.*] Ye Gods ! what insolence !—[*to*
him.] Is Xerxes thus

By thee rewarded ?

Them. I was born at Athens.

Xer. [*aside.*] I can no longer hold—Guards !
from our presence

Remove the ingrate for future punishment :

We yet may see that dauntless courage tremble.

Them. Where guilt is not, there never harbours
fear.

These placid features, midst my chains,

Shall still unmov'd appear ;

'Tis guilt alone, not threaten'd pains,

Can mark this cheek with fear.

If

If truth the name of guilt can wear,
I justly yield my breath ;
While, suffering for a crime so fair,
I triumph in my death. [*Exit guarded.*]

S C E N E XIII.

Enter ROXANA.

Rox. I scarcely, Xerxes, can believe—

Xer. Ah ! princess,
Whoe'er could have believ'd it ? In my palace,
Before the world Themistocles insults me.
He worships Athens still ; he boasts for her
His faith unshaken ; for her sake, with scorn
Foregoes the friendship and the gifts of Xerxes.

Rox. [*aside.*] My hopes revive—[*to Xer.*] Who
knows ? Perhaps the daughter
May change his will.

Xer. The daughter and the father
Alike to me are foes.—Yes, every Greek,
By natural instinct, bears to Xerxes hatred :
I will on both have vengeance.

Rox. [*aside.*] Happy change !
[*to Xer.*] All have not, sir, the heart of your
Roxana.

Xer. I know it well, and blush at what is past.

Rox. And yet I fear that if again Aspasia

Should now return——

Xer. Aspasia? O! she dares not
So far presume.

S C E N E XIV.

Enter ASPASIA.

Asp. Have pity, gracious lord!

Rox. [*to Xer.*] See if she dares so far——but
listen not

To her seducing words.

Xer. Yes, let us hear
What she would urge.

Asp. O! Xerxes, save my father;
Give him an offering to your noble nature,
And give him to my tears.

Xer. [*aside.*] Enchanting sorrow!

Rox. [*aside.*] I fear the trial now.

Xer. And art thou come
To implore my pardon? Thou, who seem'st o'er
all,
To scorn my bounty.

Asp. No! you are deceiv'd.
Shame prompted my refusal. Should you now
Restore my father, modesty would find
A specious veil to hide a maiden's blushes,——
My heart might then be yours.

Rox.

Rox. [*aside.*] O ! patience, Heaven !

Xer. And shall I then forgive the ingrate, who
loves

My deadliest foe ?

Asp. O ! no !—'tis less I ask !

Suspend your anger—I perhaps may bend

His will to yours.—Can you deny me this ?

Oh ! I was born unhappy ! Ne'er till now

The wretched went from Xerxes unreliev'd :

I am the first to prove his cruelty—

Alas ! it cannot be,—I'll ne'er believe it,

You do but feign a rigour not your own;

And, while you pity, only seem severe.

O ! mighty king ! indulge your generous heart,

Yield to its feelings, to Aspasia's hopes,

Or see her with Themistocles expire.

Xer. Aspasia, rise—[*aside.*] What power en-
chants me thus !

Rox. [*aside.*] Again am I deluded.

Xer. Let thy father

Obey my will, I pardon all the past.

Say, that on him his fate depends,

Whate'er his choice may guide,

Say that my arm the bolt suspends,

But lays not yet aside.

Then

Then let him merit to obtain
The pardon I bestow ;
For anger stay'd, when rais'd again,
Will give the weightier blow. [Exit.

S C E N E XV.

Enter ROXANA, ASPASIA, SEBASTES.

Rox. [*aside.*] I feel my spirits sink.

Asp. Forgive, Roxana,
The duty that compels——

Rox. Go, haughty maid,
Avoid Roxana's presence. Thou hast conquer'd :
I see, I own it all—I yield him to thee,
What would'st thou further ? Seek'st thou greater
triumph ?
This insult is too much !—I'll bear no more.

Asp. Thine anger patient I sustain,
I pity thy distress ;
Thou canst not see my inward pain,
What griefs my heart oppresses.

Ah ! who shall tell, since none can view
The thoughts I only know,
If envy for my bliss is due,
Or pity for my woe.

[Exit.

S C E N E XVI.

ROXANA, SEBASTES.

Seb. [*aside.*] This anger may avail me.

Rox. Oh ! Sebastes,
Could I revenge myself for Xerxes' falsehood—

Seb. The means are ready. If my faithful
friends

But join with yours, your vengeance is secur'd,
And Persia's sceptre is at our disposal.

Rox. What friends hast thou to offer me.

Seb. The bands
Of numerous malecontents, in Persia rais'd,
On me depend : Orontes is their leader,
By me elected, and at my command :
Peruse this paper late from him receiv'd.

[*gives a paper.*]

Rox. Go, friend ; await me now in my apartment,
I'll join thee soon. 'Twere dangerous here with thee
To hold such converse.

Seb. May I then presume
To hope——

Rox. Away.—Fear not, I will be grateful :
I owe thee much and well I know thou lov'st me.

Seb. [*aside.*] At length my hopes have found a
happy hour.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE

S C E N E XVII.

ROXANA, *alone.*

And canst thou, O ! Roxana, then resolve
To crush the man whom late thy soul ador'd ?
Yes, let him fall—the ingrate contemns my love,
And he shall pay the forfeit to my wrongs :
O ! I could see him to a thousand foes
Expos'd, and see him with a tearless eye ;
Would at his latest hour——O ! Heaven, I boast
Of anger, while my trembling heart belies me,

The bosom now with anger burns
To punish an ingrate :
But soon to love our anger turns,
And softens at his fate.

We seek revenge on him who pain'd
The fond believing breast ;
But when we find it near attain'd,
The vengeance we detest.

[*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III. S C E N E I.

An apartment where THEMISTOCLES is confined.

THEMISTOCLES *'alone.* ¹ *fl*

O! Athens! O! my country! sacred name
To me so fatal. Sweet till now it seem'd
For thee to bend my cares, for thee to shed
My dearest blood. With patience I endur'd
Thy harsh decrees: amidst my woes resign'd,
I rovd from shore to shore; but to preserve
My faith to thee, I find myself compell'd
To appear ingrate; and to a king so generous,
Who, powerful and incens'd, forgets the claims
Of past resentment; clasps me to his breast;
Heaps honours on me; and to me intrusts
His dignity and empire. Pardon, Athens,
This is too much. Thou still shalt be the God
Of all my thoughts, as thou hast ever been;
But now I feel, and first begin to feel
How dear my duty costs me.

S C E N E II.

Enter SEBASTES.

Seb. Xerxes sends
By me, Themistocles, and wills to know
At once thy final choice: he trusts to find thee
Repentant

Repentant of thine error : this he hopes
And says, he never can so far believe
Themistocles ungrateful.

Them. Never, never
Shall such reproach be mine : this witness, Heaven !
That fees my heart,—O ! could my king as well
There read Themistocles.—Conduct me, friend,
Conduct me to him.

Seb. 'Tis not now permitted.
First on the sacred altar come prepar'd
To swear eternal enmity to Greece,
Or hope no more to view the face of Xerxes.

Them. And must I, at no other price, obtain
To see my benefactor ?

Seb. No.—swear this,
And thou art Xerxes' friend ; but this refus'd,
I tremble for thy fate : in this thou know'st
The king implacable.

Them. [*aside.*] Then must I prove
A rebel to my country, or be stain'd,
With base ingratitude ? Before the world
Might I not plead my love, my faith to Xerxes,
Or dying own his benefits conferr'd ?

[*thoughtful.*]

Seb. Resolve.

Them. [*aside.*] It shall be so—let us escape
This cruel labyrinth, and be the means
Worthy Themistocles. [*to Seb.*] Go now, prepare
The

The altar, beverage and the sacred vase,
 Whate'er the oath requires—my choice is made :
 I follow thee.

Seb. With speed I bear to Xerxes
 The gladfome tidings.

Them. Hear me.—Say, is yet
 Lyfimachus departed ?

Seb. From the port
 His anchors now are loos'd.

Them. O ! haste, detain him ;
 Let him be present at the solemn rite :
 Sebastes, bear my wishes to the king.

Seb. It shall be so. Thou now may'st rule at
 will
 The heart of Xerxes. [Exit.

S C E N E III.

THEMISTOCLES *alone.*

Be my life's last hour
 With splendor clos'd ; and, like a dying torch,
 Quench'd in a blaze.—Ho ! guards, call hither
 to me

Neocles and Aspasia.—Let me think—
 What is this death ? Is it a good ? We then
 Should haste to welcome it.—Is it an evil ?
 We then should shorten our expectance of it :
 The greater evil.—He deserves not life

Who

Who rates his fame beneath it.—Life is still
The privilege of every mortal born,
But fame th' exclusive privilege, the treasure
Of noble minds.—The vile may fear his death,
Who, lost to others, to himself unknown,
Died at his birth, and with him carries all
Unnotic'd to the tomb.—He dauntless yields
His latest breath, who can, without a blush,
View how he liv'd, and viewing, calmly die.

S C E N E IV.

Enter NEOCLES *and* ASPASIA.

Neoc. My dearest father.

Asp. O! my much-lov'd lord.

Neoc. Is it then true, that you will choose a life
Of gratitude to Xerxes?

Asp. Is it true
That you at length have yielded to compassion
For us and for yourself?

Them. Be silent both,
And calmly hear me—Know ye well the obedience
A father's will requires?

Neoc. That law is sacred.

Asp. A tie that nothing can dissolve.

Them. 'Tis well.

I charge you to conceal what I impart

Till

Till all I have determin'd ~~with~~ myself
Shall be mature.

Neoc. His promise Neocles
Most firmly plights.

Asp. To this Aspasia swears.

Them. Sit then ; and give me each a proof of
courage

In listening to my words. [*sits.*

Neoc. [*aside.*] I freeze with terror ! [*sits.*

Asp. [*aside.*] Alas ! I tremble. [*sits.*

Them. Hear me, O ! my children,
'Tis the last time we e'er shall speak together :
Till now I've liv'd with glory ; if my life
Be still prolong'd, I lose perhaps the fruit
Of every toil—Themistocles must die.

Asp. What says my father ?

Neoc. O ! what thoughts are these ?

Them. The noble Xerxes is my liberal patron,
My country, Greece : to him my gratitude,
To her I owe my truth.—Each duty now
Opposes each : if either I infringe,
Rebellion or ingratitude must stain
Your father's name : by death I may avoid
The dread alternative.—With me I carry
A potent friendly poison——

Asp. O ! my father,
Have you not given but now your word to Xerxes
To

To meet him at the altar ?

Them. In his presence
The deed must be completed.

Neoc. But *Sebastes*
Affirm'd, that at the altar you would take
A solemn oath——

Them. I know he so believes :
This suits my purpose well ; with such a hope
Xerxes prepares to hear me,—I would wish
All *Perfia* to behold the glorious deed
Would call, to every thought my breast conceals,
To all I feel for *Athens* and for *Xerxes*,
As judge and witness, a recording world.

Neoc. [*aside.*] O ! wretched, wretched we !

Asp. Undone *Aspasia* ! [*they weep.*]

Them. Ah ! children, whence this weakness ?
Hide from me
Such unavailing grief, nor make me blush
That I'm your father.—You indeed might weep
If e'er *Themistocles* had fear'd to die.

Asp. When you are dead, ah ! whither shall
we fly ?

Neoc. What then remains for us ?

Them. For you remain
The love of virtue, the desire of glory,
The guardian care of Heaven and my example.

Asp. Alas ! my father.

Them. Hear me : I must leave you,
Alone and orphans, in a foreign land,
Amidst your foes, without the due support
That nature claims ; and little yet experienc'd
In all the fickle turns of human life.
And hence (I well foresee) you both must suffer,
And suffer much ; but ever bear in mind
You are the children of Themistocles :
Let this suffice ; and may your deeds proclaim you
In every trial worthy of the name.
Let the first objects of your thought be honour,
Your country, and that duty which the Gods
Have call'd you to fulfil ; and know the mind
In every state can make itself illustrious,
And still employ the choicest gifts of Heaven,
To grace no less the cottage than the throne.
Sink not beneath the weight of adverse fortune :
Evils too great to bear will never last,
And evils we can bear, may be subdued.
Let virtue urge you still to deeds of praise,
And not the recompense.—Abhor the guilt,
And not the punishment ; and if your fate
Should e'er impel you to an act unworthy,
One way remains—and learn that way from me.

[*rises.*]

Neoc. O ! do not leave us yet.

[*rises.*]

Asp. My dearest father !
And shall I never, never see you more ?

Them.

Them. Here break we off—nor vainly thus prolong

These last adieus.—It is too much, my children,
Too much for feeble nature—our affections
Too far will weaken—I—I am a father,
And O ! I feel—farewell my dearest children !

[*embrace.*

Ah ! cease these unavailing tears,
Nor think that now to death I go :
I go to triumph o'er the stars,
And every ill that mortals know.

I go to crown my last of days
With added wreaths of virtuous spoils ;
I go to ensure, with endless praise,
The fruit of all my former toils. [Exit.

S C E N E V.

ASPASIA, NEOCLES.

Asp. O ! Neocles.

Neoc. Aspasia.

Asp. O ! my brother !

Neoc. What dreadful stroke is this !

Asp. O ! most unhappy !
And whither shall we go ?

Neoc. To prove us worthy

Of such a father, [*firmly.*] Let us hence, my
sister,

And see, intrepid see, Themistocles

Thus triumph o'er himself.—Our noble bearing
Will make his death more pleasing."

Asp. Let us go :

—Alas ! I cannot—still my trembling feet— [*sits.*

Neoc. And will you thus disgrace the birth you
boast ?

Asp. And can your constancy support the fight ?

Neoc. What I may want his virtue shall supply.

While from his features, pale in death,

The beams of virtue shine,

The courage in his latest breath

Shall give new force to mine.

A father calls me hence to show

A son's undaunted breast ;

To obey a father's call I go,

And leave to Fate the rest.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E VI.

ASPASIA *alone.*

Then shall my brother bear a firmer mind

Than I, alas ! can boast ?—Does not the blood

His father gave him warm Aspasia's veins ? ,

Like his my birth was from Themistocles.

Yes,

Yes, we will pay him every pious duty :
And let him, when he breathes his last, repose
On this sad breast, while on his clay-cold hand
An orphan daughter prints the farewell kiss,
And closes with her hand his dying eyes.
—O Heaven ! what cruel image !——Ah ! what
chillness

Through every fibre creeps—I fain would go,
And yet I still remain—I freeze with horror,
And glow with fear and shame : at once I'm urg'd,
At once repuls'd—I lose the time in tears,
Resolve on nothing, while my father's lost.

While honour bids me hence remove
My trembling feet detain me here ;
And still distressful change I prove,
By courage rais'd, depress'd by fear.

Ye Gods ! from this unhappy breast
 Bid wearied life at length depart :
 Enough, alas ! by woes depress'd,
 That long have rent my bleeding heart.

[Exit.]

S C E N E VII.

XERXES *alone.*

Where is my general? Where Themistocles?
Let him no longer keep from his embrace
A king that loves him.

SCENE

S C E N E VIII.

Enter ROXANA with a paper.

Rox. Xerxes, I am come
In search of thee.

Xer. [*aside.*] Unfortunate encounter !

Rox. Hear me ; and let this hearing be the last.

Xer. Full well I know, Roxana, that your anger
Is kindled now against me : well I know
You threaten me with vengeance.

Rox. 'Tis most true,
I would revenge—I am indeed the offended :
Then learn my vengeance. Xerxes, know thy life
And sceptre are in danger. In this paper
Read all the black design : prevent the treason,
Preserve thyself—farewell. [*going.*]

Xer. Yet hear me, princefs :
At least permit me for this generous gift—

Rox. Let this suffice—Roxana is reveng'd.

What sweet revenge the generous mind
Will ever prove, a wrong design'd
With friendship to repay ?
This shall Roxana's heart restore
To every joy it knew before,
And all her pangs allay.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE

S C E N E IX.

XERXES alone.

This paper to Sebaſtes is conſign'd,
And written by Orontes.—Let us now— [*reads.*
O Heaven ! what impious treachery ! Sebaſtes
Is then the ſecret author of the tumults
In Egypt rais'd ; while ever at my ſide,
With well-diſſembled zeal—Behold him here ;
And dares the traitor now appear before me ?

S C E N E X.

Enter SEBASTES.

Seb. At length I come, O Xerxes, to requeſt
A recompence for all my truth and toils.

Xer. So great indeed, Sebaſtes, are thy merits
Thou well may'ſt hope for every thing from Xerxes.
What would'ſt thou ? Speak.

Seb. Themiſtocles departs
To conquer Athens : but for Egypt's bands
No chief as yet is nam'd : of theſe I aſk
From Xerxes the command.

Xer. Would'ſt thou no more ?

Seb. Sebaſtes only ſeeks to give to Xerxes
Proofs of his zeal.

Xer.

Xer. Already have I many.
This task is worthy thee : but know'st thou well
The foil of Egypt ?

Seb. All her mountains, rivers,
Her forests, ways, defiles ; I could describe
Her very rocks.

Xer. All this will not suffice :
It much imports to know the names of those
By whom the tumults have been rais'd.

Seb. Orontes,
And he alone.

Xer. I deem'd that other chiefs
With him were join'd : this paper bears the names ;
See if to thee they're known. [*gives the paper.*]

Seb. And whence, my lord,
Receiv'd you this ?—O Heaven ! what do I see !

Xer. How now ! thou art disturb'd ; thy colour
changes—
What, art thou silent ?

Seb. [*aside.*] Ah ! I am betray'd.

Xer. Ungrateful vassal ! pale with dread,
Too late thy looks appear ;
When first thy dark design was laid,
'Twas then a time for fear.

But

But ever wise are Heaven's decrees,
Which nothing can withstand :
The traitor ne'er his danger sees
Till shipwreck is at hand. [Exit.

S C E N E XI.

SEBASTES *alone.*

Disloyal princeſs ! haſt thou then betray'd me ?
Inſenſate ! ſhall I raſhly dare to accuſe her ?
And does a traitor now complain of treaſon ?
This have I well deſerv'd.—Ah ! fly, Sebaſtes,
But whither ? From myſelf I cannot fly,
And in my breaſt I bear my own tormentor.
Where'er I go will terror and remorse
Pursue my ſteps and ſet my crime before me.

Ye cruel pangs that mortals know,
When theſe on guilt attend ;
Ah ! wherefore, heavenly Powers, ſo flow
A traitor's heart to rend ?

Ye dreadful voices ! ever near,
Whoſe ſounds my boſom chill,
Why not till now my trembling ear
With warning terrors fill ? [Exit.

S C E N E XII.

The palace. An altar with fire kindled, and upon the altar the cup prepared for the oath.

XERXES, ASPASIA, NEOCLES, *Satraps, Guards and People.*

Xer. Why, Neocles, so sad? Whence, fair Aspasia,

Those starting tears? Now, when the father comes
To swear to me his faith, the children mourn.
Are then the friendship and the love of Xerxes
By you disastrous deem'd? Speak.

Asp. }
Neoc. } O! ye Powers!

S C E N E XIII.

Enter ROXANA, LYSIMACHUS and Greeks.

Rox. What would'st thou with Roxana?

Lys. Xerxes, say,
Why am I summon'd hither?

Xer. 'Tis my will
Roxana and Lysimachus be present.

Lys. To witness now some new affront to Athens?

Rox. To bear again my injuries unmov'd?

Lys.

Lyf. To see the inconstancy of false Aspasia?

Asp. You are deceiv'd : afflict me not unjustly,
Cruel Lyfimachus. Believe me still
The same Aspasia, nor oppresses a mind
Already sunk with grief.

Xer. What do I hear !
Are you then lovers ?

Asp. To conceal it longer
Were hopeless : I've already said too much.

Xer. And didst thou not, Aspasia, promise
Xerxes
To give to him thy hand ?

Asp. A father's life
Requir'd this sacrifice.

Xer. [*to Lyf.*] And didst not thou
Seek to his foes to render up the father
Of her thy soul ador'd ?

Lyf. So Athens will'd.

Xer. [*aside.*] Transcendent virtue !

Rox. See the Grecian leader
Is now at hand.

Neoc. [*aside.*] Why wears not Neocles
A look like his, intrepid and serene ?

[*looking out on his father.*]

Asp. O ! feeble heart, how dost thou tremble
now !

S C E N E XIV.

Enter THEMISTOCLES.

Xer. At length, Themistocles, thou hast resolv'd
To be the friend of Xerxes : once again
Return to meet the embraces of a king
Who honours thus—— [*advances to embrace him.*

Them. Forbear. [*drawing back respectfully.*

Xer. And why forbear ?

Them. I am not worthy yet—My merits now
Rest on the solemn act that brings me here.

Xer. See on the altar, for the rite prepar'd,
The cup with beverage crown'd.—Themistocles,
Approach, and, with the vow requir'd, begin
The chastisement of Greece.

Them. Attend me, Xerxes :
Know first, thou art deceiv'd : I promis'd here
My presence, not my oath.

Xer. How !

Them. Hear me, Xerxes,
And thou, Lyfimachus, hear all ye people,
Assembled thus spectators, hear and judge
Themistocles with truth ; and each be now
His witness and defender.—Adverse fate
Compels me here to incur the guilt of treason,
Or black ingratitude : no choice remains

But

But this, to hold or to relinquish life,
The liberal gift of Heaven.—To keep me still
Without a crime I see one only way,
The way that leads to death—that choice be mine.

Lys. What do I hear !

Xer. Eternal Gods !

Them. This poison, [*takes it from his bosom.*
Companion ever in my mournful exile,
Mix'd with the draught yon sacred cup contains,
Shall make the work complete.

[pours the poison into the cup.

—And every God,
That reads my heart, be present at the offering
A willing victim makes ; a victim here
To loyal truth, to gratitude and honour.

Asp. I feel my senses fail.

Xer. I'm struck with wonder.

Them. Lyfimachus, my friend, do thou assure
My country of my love, and plead at least
Indulgence for my ashes.—I forgive
The worst of fortune if I find a tomb
Where first I found a cradle.—Mighty king !
Repent not of thy benefits conferr'd,
The admiring world shall be their recompense.
All I can now repay thee (cruel Fate !)
Is to profess my gratitude and die.
Ye gracious Powers ! if e'er the dying vows
Of those who know not guile ascend to Heaven,
Protect

Protect your Athens! To your care receive
This king and kingdom: in the heart of Xerxes
Inspire the wish to war with Greece no more:
Yes, Xerxes, with my life conclude thy hatred.
Friend! children! king and people, all farewell!

[takes the cup.]

Xer. Ah! hold—what dost thou? Touch not
with thy lip
The deadly cup.

Them. And wherefore?

Xer. Never, never
Shall Xerxes thus permit——

Them. And why, my king?

Xer. Too many causes rush upon my mind
To speak them now. *[takes the cup from him.]*

Them. Thou canst not, Xerxes, take
From me the means of death: this power alone
Is not allow'd to kings.

Xer. Ah! live, the hero, *[throws away the cup.]*
The glory of our age! Still love thy country,
To this I now consent; she's worthy of thee.
Even Xerxes' self almost begins to love her:
And who could ever hate the happy foil,
The glorious mother of a son like thee?

Them. Ye Gods! can this be true? So far be-
yond
My best of hopes!

Xer.

Xer. Hear then the great effects
Of virtuous emulation—On this altar,
For you prepar'd to swear eternal hatred,
I vow eternal amity with Greece.
Now let her rest, and owe, illustrious exile,
To such a citizen her wish'd repose.

Them. O! generous king! what art hast thou
attain'd
To triumph o'er Themistocles? Such virtue
Exceeds a mortal's aim.—O Greece! O Athens!
O! happy, happy exile!

A/p. Rapturous moment!

Neoc. O! prosperous day!

Lyf. Permit me, noble friends,
To sail for Greece, and there to all proclaim
Your generous strife of honour; well I know
Alike for both her gratitude will warm;
For him, who thus asserts his country's cause,
And him, whose godlike gift ensures her peace.

SCENE LAST.

Enter SEBASTES.

Seb. For all my crimes, my sovereign lord, I
here
Entreat the punishment: I hate a life
That thus to you——

[*kneels.*

Xer. Sebastes, rise: this day

Shall

Shall only know content : I pardon thee.
I render back Aspasia's promise given,
And leave her heart her own : my royal faith
I plight to recompense Roxana's love.

Asp. My dear Lyfimachus !

Rox. Ah ! generous Xerxes !

Them. O ! grant, ye Gods ! Themistocles may
prove
Still grateful to his king,

Xer. Implore the Gods
To guard thy life, and I shall find thee grateful ;
And if my virtue kindle from th' example
Thy virtue gives, thou render'st back to Xerxes
Far more than Xerxes ever gave to thee.

CHORUS.

From emulation virtue grows
With added splendor bright :
So torch to torch united glows,
And yields redoubled light.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

SIROES.

S I R O E S.

PERSONS

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

COSROES, King of PERSIA, in love with **LAODICE**.

SIROES, his eldest Son, in love with **EMIRA**.

MEDARSES, his youngest Son.

EMIRA, Princess of CAMBAYA, disguised in man's apparel, under the name of **HYDASPES**, in love with **SIROES**.

LAODICE, in love with **SIROES**, Sister to **ARAXES**.

ARAXES, General of the armies of PERSIA, the friend of **SIROES**.

SCENE, SELEUCIA.

S I R O E S.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

*A temple dedicated to the sun, with an altar and
image of the Deity.*

COSROES, SIROES, MEDARSES.

Cof. To you my sons, not more am I a father
Than father to the state : to you I owe
Paternal tendernefs ; but to the state
A fucceffor, whom Perfia fhall confefs
A worthy heir of our imperial feat.
This day, between you fhall our choice decide ;
And him, I choofe, muft share with me the throne,
And learn with me to guide the reins of empire.
O ! happy Cofroes, could I live to fee,
Ere lafting fleep has clos'd thefe aged eyes,
A fon who, wife in peace and brave in arms,
Might fhade the luftre of his father's fame.

Med. On you my fate depends.

Sir. And whom will Cofroes
Esteem the worthieft ?

Cof.

Cof. Equal is your merit ;
 In Siroes I regard the gift of valour,
 And praise the gentler virtues of Medarfes :
 Cofroes in thee dislikes thy haughty spirit ;
[to Sir.

In him his inexperience'd age ; but time
 Will cure the faults of both : meanwhile I fear
 My choice proclaim'd may kindle in your bosoms
 New flames of mutual strife. Behold the altar,
 Behold the God : let each now swear in peace
 To abide by our decree, and swear to obey,
 Without a murmur, our appointed heir,
 In loyalty and truth,

Sir. [*aside.*] Shall Siroes' lip
 Pronounce an oath like this ?—O ! no.—

Med. Behold
 Medarfes prompt to obey—the throne is mine,
[*aside.*

[*advances to the altar.*]

“ Before thy presence, to whose fostering power
 “ Her blessings nature owes, Medarfes bends,
 “ And swears to pay the new-elected king
 “ His earliest homage ; if I fail in aught
 “ This oath exacts, O ! let thy cheering beams
 “ Be chang'd for me to more than midnight
 darkness.”

Cof. My dearest son ! Now, Siroes, thou draw
 near,
 And learn obedience from thy younger brother.

Med.

Med. He thinks, but speaks not.

Cof. Why dost thou delay
To, ensure my peace? How are thy thoughts
employ'd?

Sir. And wherefore should I swear? Such cause-
less doubt

Offends your son? What are the merits, say,
By which Medarfes now aspires to reign?
My father, well you know how far my claim
To elder birth; already was my heart
Inur'd to bear the wrongs of adverse fortune,
When first a father in the cradle heard
His infant cries: you know the hostile spoils
By Siroes added to your former triumphs.
You know the wounds your fame has cost a son,
I groan'd beneath the steely corselet's weight,
In fields of blood and in the face of death;
While he in sloth dragg'd on his days, 'midst all
A parent's fond endearment. This, my father,
You know, and wherefore then must Siroes
swear?

Cof. I know yet more—I know, in my despite,
Thou lov'dst Emira, daughter to Asbites,
My deadly foe: I heard thy sighs of anguish
The day I took from him his life and kingdom:
Then didst thou vow deep hatred to thy father;
And were Emira living still, who knows
To what, by love impell'd, thy rage might tend.

Sir.

Sir. Proceed : indulge at full the blind affection
 That makes you, Cosroës, thus unjust to me.
 Break, for Medarfes, all the ties of nature,
 And let him from the throne give Persia laws ;
 While Siroes, mingled with the ignoble herd,
 Shall on his younger brother's hand (a hand
 Unfit to wield the sceptre of dominion)
 Imprint the kifs of base fervility.
 But Gods there are, whose justice ever wakes
 To aid the oppress'd : the world confess Medarfes
 To Siroes yields in merit as in years.

Cos. Rash boy ! and dost thou threaten ? Know,
 my will.—

Med. Be calm, my father ! and to him resign
 The Persian throne, suffice for me your love.

Cos. No : for his punishment, this day shall see
 The audacious rebel bend to thee his king :
 I will subdue his pride ; and fain would see
 What world will arm to raise him to the throne.

[*to Sir.*] Since, swell'd with pride, thy stubborn
 heart,

Paternal love disdains,
 Expect to find that sterner part
 The judge severe maintains.

Whate'er a rebel bosom knows,
 Perchance in thine may dwell :
 But ere mature the treason grows,
 I'll crush it in the shell.

[*Exit.*
 SCENE

S C E N E II.

SIROES, MEDARSES.

Sir. Canst thou, Medarfes, fix without a blush
Thine eyes on Siroes ?

Med. Ha ! Does Siroes thus
Address his king ? Thou know'st that I this day
To thee am arbiter of life and death :
Think then how life to merit as my gift.

Sir. Thou art too hasty, prince, to assume the
 sile
That fits a monarch : the paternal crown
Infolds not yet thy brows ; and ere the day
Declines, our father may repent his purpose.

S C E N E III.

Enter EMIRA in a man's habit, under the name of
HYDASPES.

Em. Ah ! princes, wherefore this unhappy
 strife ?
Forbear such contest as so ill beseems
The name of brethren. On this joyful day
Let not Seleucia view you hateful rivals,
But knit by equal ties of love and honour.

Med.

Med. I strive to appease my brother's causeless
 anger,
And bear my wrongs in silence, but in vain.

Sir. O ! well feign'd modesty !

Em. [*to Sir.*] I'm not to learn
The meekness of Medarfes.

Sir. Dear Hydaspes,
It ever was his wont to veil his insults
With dark diffimulation.

Med. [*to Em.*] Mark, my friend,
His flushing face, his eyes' malignant glances,
Thus speak the hatred rankling in his heart.

Em. [*to Med.*] Depart, incense him not ; leave
 me alone
In converse with him.

Sir. O ! perfidious.

Med. Heavens !
Without a cause you now insult your brother.
Appease him, dear Hydaspes ; say, in him
I venerate our Persia's great support,
And own, in Siroes now my sovereign lord.

Em. Go, leave us then.

Med. [*aside.*] My triumph is at hand.

[*Exit Medarfes.*]

SCENE

S C E N E IV.

EMIRA, SIROES.

Sir. O ! lovely and belov'd Emira.*Em.* Hold.

Reveal me not, but call me still Hydaspes.

Sir. No ear is nigh, and you are known, Emira,
To me alone : behold the wrongs I suffer
From an unfeeling father.*Em.* Yes, I've seen,
And seen it long : but what does Siroes do ?
He rests meanwhile in stupid apathy,
The lethargy of mean degenerate souls ;
And while a kingdom moulders from his hope,
He, like a child, a helpless infant, finds
No other arms to oppose his cruel fortune,
But fruitless sighs and idle lamentation.*Sir.* And what could Siroes do ?*Em.* What could he do ?
What could he not ? For him his faithful people
With loyal fury burn : a single blow
Secures thy triumph, and at once completes
My vengeance and thy own.*Sir.* Alas ! Emira,
What would'st thou ask ?*Em.* I ask a single blow,
Needful to both—and know'st thou who I am ?

Sir. Ah ! well I know thee for my soul's best
treasure,
Cambaya's princefs—yes, thou art Emira.

Em. Say, I am she, whose fire Asbites died
By Cofroes' cruel hand ; that hapless daughter,
Who stript of empire, in a foreign clime,
Now wanders far from her paternal feat ;
Who veils, in this attire, her woman's weakness,
And hopes at length to reap a great revenge.

Sir. O Heaven ! by me receiv'd within the palace,
You found the means to win the heart of Cofroes :
His favour all is yours ; and can you now,
Forgetful of his benefits conferr'd,
Still brood in secret o'er revenge and hatred.

Em. The tyrant loves Hydaspes not Emira.
Remember, if you wish Emira's hand,
I wish for Cofroes' death.

Sir. And could Emira
Receive me stain'd with blood, this face distorted
With all the horrors of a father's murder ?

Em. And how can I, forgetful of my oath,
Behold a parent's pale and bleeding shade
Still hover round and call on me for vengeance ;
While careless, stretch'd upon my downy pillow,
I sleep beside the son of him that slew him ?

Sir. If then——

Em. If then thou wouldst receive my hand,
Thou know'st what service can alone deserve it :

Thou must assist my vengeance.

Sir. Never ! never !

Em. Hear, if thou, Siroes, still refuse thine arm,
Another's is not wanting : yes, this day
Completes the work ; and he whose courage aids
Emira's cause, Emira's love rewards :
Thus, should thy coward hand refuse the stroke,
Thou lovest me, and canst not save thy father.

Sir. Are these, Emira, these the tender feelings
With which you once were wont to sooth my
 anguish ?

'Twas hatred led you hither, while to me
You feign'd your guide was love.

Em. I kept from thee
My hatred hid, while Cosroes was a father ;
But now he sinks the father in the tyrant,
No longer deem in thee to find a son.

Sir. And would'st thou have me then a parricide ?
And does the crime of loving thee deserve
A punishment so dreadful ?

Em. Now full well
I read thy heart : thou never lov'dst Emira.

Sir. I never lov'd !

Em. Behold Laodice,
She, who enjoys thy love, she best confirms it.

Sir. Laodice ! I but endur'd her passion
With faint repulse, to sooth, by harmless guile
In her, whom Cosroes loves, a powerful foe.

· S C E N E V.

Enter LAODICE.

Em. At length thou com'st in time, Laodice,
To ease a faithful lover, who so oft
With tender sighs has languish'd in thy absence.

Laod. Hydaspes speaks, and ah ! my easy heart
Too soon believes.

Em. The rest let Siroes speak.

Sir. [*aside.*] Unfeeling maid to torture thus my
bosom !

Laod. [*to Sir.*] And can I think, illustrious
prince, your heart
Will so debase itself in loving me ?

Em. [*to Laod.*] His love is firmly yours.

Sir. [*aside to Em.*] Hers, say'st thou, hers ?

Em. [*to him.*] Peace, perjur'd man.

Laod. Does love so little then
Give utterance to his lips ?

Em. A faithful lover
Whose bosom burns, still feeds the flame in silence.

Laod. Yet oft the glances of an eye betray
The silent lip : but not a look from him
Is turn'd on me ; nay rather, as confus'd,
He bends his eyes to earth in stupid gaze,
And seems to give thy every word the lie.

Em.

Em. Not so, Laodice, you are deceiv'd ;
You know not Siroes : but I know him well ;
He stands abash'd in presence of Hydaspes.

Sir. [*to Em.*] Alas, my love ! far other dost
thou know.

Em. [*to him.*] Traitor, no more.

Laod. Abash'd before Hydaspes ?
Thou know'st he has no fault, or if a fault,
'Tis courage in extreme, not timid shame.

Em. But love, that changes all, can render valiant
The coward heart, and fearful make the bold.

Sir. [*aside.*] Unfeeling maid ! to torture thus
my bosom.

Em. 'Twere best to leave you : constant lovers
ever,
Who love like you, abhor society.

Laod. Hydaspes, yet I tremble lest he still
Deceive thee and myself.

Em. I dare not wholly
Condemn your doubts ; for well by proof I know,
In trusting others never does the mind
Exert the caution confidence requires ;
We seldom find fidelity in love.

The faith of every lover still,
How dangerous to believe ;
Their sighs, their prayers, their tears at will
The easy heart deceive.

Shall

Shall man, by self reproach unblam'd,
The fair, he wrong'd, survey ;
As if the crime were venial nam'd,
Affection to betray ?

[*Exit.*

S C E N E VI.

SIROES, LAODICE.

Laod. You speak not, Siroes—what is now your
fear ?

Hydaspes is not present : freely then
Disclose your secret.

Sir. [*aside.*] Why am I pursued
With love so fatal ?—Ah ! Laodice,
Subdue a passion that endangers both,
Should Cosroes, who adores thee, ever learn——

Laod. O ! fear not him, he never will discover
Our gentle intercourse.

Sir. But then, Hydaspes——

Laod. Hydaspes is a friend ; and, Siroes, he
Approves our love.

Sir. Not always do the lips
And heart agree.

Laod. We but torment ourselves
With fancied ills ; if obstacles like these
Must from our breast expunge such dear affection.

Sir. Others there are—Laodice, farewell.

Laod.

Laod. Yet stay—and why conceal them ?

Sir. Heavenly powers !

Spare me the shame of speech, and spare thyself
The pain to hear them.

Laod. Will you leave me then

Thus lost in cruel doubts ? Speak, prince, Ah !
speak.

Sir. [*aside.*] O pain to suffer !—hear me then
declare,

Ah ! no—forgive me—I must leave thee.

Laod. Never,

Till you have given me first to know your secret.

Sir. Some other time shall tell thee all.

Laod. But now,

Now is the eventful moment.

Sir. Hear me then,

Since thou wilt know, I burn with other flames ;

My faith is plighted to a lovelier object ;

The fairest of her sex : I love not thee,

Nor ever yet have lov'd, and should thy hopes

Aspire to change my heart, such hopes are vain :

Distract me not—my secret now is known,

If e'er these lips could love declare,

These eyes soft glances dart ;

These treacherous lips must falsely swear,

These eyes belie my heart.

Then

Then seek some other breast to move,
All thoughts of me forsake ;
And for thy recompense in love,
This friendly council take,

[*Exit.*

S C E N E VII.

LAODICE *alone.*

And shall I then endure such cruel scorn ?
Oh ! no, Laodice ; affront like this
Must be reveng'd. Shall that ungrateful boast
His triumph in my shame ? A thousand foes
Will, at my bidding, rise at once against him.
It shall be so—his father must believe
The son his rival, both in love and empire ;
And by my arts impell'd, shall now my brother
Araxes, offer to Medarfes' aid
The troops in arms ; and if I meet not all
My wish, at least I will not fight alone,

S C E N E VIII.

Enter ARAXES.

Arax. My sister, with impatience have I fought
thee.

Laod. And now most opportune for me, we
meet.

Ar. Thy help was ne'er more needful.

Laod.

Laod. Nor have I
So wish'd thy converse : know my brother—

Ar. Hold :
First hear me, sister : fir'd with hasty passion,
Cosroes will raise Medarfes to the throne :
Orders are issued for the solemn pomp ;
The people vent complaints ; the soldiers murmur.
Thou, if thou canst, appease an angry father,
Incens'd unjustly, and in Siroes save
A hero to the land.

Laod. A hero ?—No,
Thou art deceiv'd ; for in the breast of Siroes
Resides a soul most obstinately savage ;
A heart o'erflow'd with pride : he seems to prize
Himself alone, and thinks the subject world
Must all pay tribute to his matchless valour.

Ar. Is this my sister speaks ? And dost thou
think—

Laod. I think his ruin is by us, Araxes,
Most firmly to be wish'd : his fall is near,
Prevent not thou his fate.

Ar. And who has thus
Estrang'd Laodice ?

Laod. 'Tis not for thee
To fathom yet my secret.

Ar. Every one
Will blame your fickle and inconstant nature.

Laod. " 'Tis often constancy to change the mind."

If ocean gently lave the shore,
And now in storms, with deepening roar
The mariner dismays ;
No fault is his, who but the power
Of stronger winds obeys.

If I with changing fortune veer,
Yet let me not be blam'd ;
What once inconstant might appear
May now be virtue nam'd. [Exit.

S C E N E IX.

ARAXES *alone.*

I shall not for Laodice betray
My friendship or my duty.—Who can tell
The secret cause from which her anger springs ?
Such is the genius of the weaker sex :
O ! woman, beauteous woman ! how might man
Indulge his rapture in your love bestow'd,
If constancy were join'd with female charms.

The uncertain stream that murmuring flows
Between its banks, the wind that blows,
Oft shifting through the rustling boughs,
Is steadier far than you.

Yet

Yet simple lovers still prepare
New food to nourish amorous care ;
With tears and sighs pursue the fair,
And hope to find her true. [Exit.

S C E N E X.

*An inner apartment belonging to COSROES. A table
with seats.*

SIROES *with a paper.*

Still let me from Emira's snares preserve
My father's life.—This paper, thus impress'd
With characters disguis'd, describes the danger,
But keeps unknown the traitor.—If my silence
Conceal the first, I must betray my father ;
And if I tell the last, I sacrifice
My cruel, lov'd Emira—Ha ! the king
Seems this way bending—Whither shall I turn ?
Should he perceive me here he'll sure suspect
From me the warning comes, and force me then
To name the guilty : best awhile retire
And hide me from his sight—O Gods ! defend,
Defend Emira, guard my father's life,
And ah ! protect my innocence. [retires.

SCENE

S C E N E XI.

Enter COSROES.

Cof. Shall then
The heart of Cofroes from a rebel son
Receive its laws? 'Twere madness but to think it.

S C E N E XII.

Enter LAODICE.

Cof. What brings my fair-one unexpected here?

Laod. I come to claim protection.—Cofroes'
favour

Suffices not, even in these palace walls,
To shelter me from fear; nor those are wanting
That outrage and insult me.

Cof. Who can dare
So far presume?

Laod. My crime, alas! is truth
And loyalty to you.'

Cof. Declare the guilty,
And leave with me the care to punish him.

Laod. Your son attempted to seduce my love,
And when I durst reject his impious suit,
He menac'd me with death.

Sir.

Sir. [*listening.*] What do I hear ?

Cof. My lov'd Medarfes could not thus offend :
No—Siroes is the criminal.

Laod. 'Tis true.

What can a woman, helpless, unprotected,
Against the royal heir of Persia's king ?

Sir. [*apart.*] All, all the world conspire against
my peace !

Cof. And shall he prove my rival too in love ?
Dry up those tears, O ! lovely mourner, calm
Thy troubled thoughts.—O ! most ungrateful
Siroes !

And hast thou dar'd ? Believe not I am Cofroes
If I forget—enough—Laodice,
Yes, thou shalt see——

Sir. [*apart.*] O ! pain to think !

Laod. [*aside.*] 'Twas wife
In me to accuse him first.

Cof. [*sits at the table.*] Unworthy son !

[*sees the paper left by Sir. and reads to himself.*]

Laod. Had I foreseen such anguish to your heart
I never then——[*aside.*] What paper's that ? He
reads

Abforb'd and lost—he changes colour !

Cof. Gods !

What worse could angry Heaven have rais'd against
me !

Was

Was ever day like this ?

[*rises*

Laod. My gracious lord,
What now afflicts you ?

S C E N E XIII.

Enter MEDARSES.

Med. Father, I behold
Your features chang'd.

Cof. [*gives him the paper.*] Read there, belov'd
Medarfes,
And tremble as thou read'st.

Laod. [*aside.*] What can this mean ?

Med. [*reads.*] “ Cofroes, a snare is laid to take
“ thy life,

“ By one believ'd most loyal : on this day
“ The blow is meant. Suspect in every one
“ The secret traitor : death is surely thine,
“ If from thy presence thou remov'st not all
“ That share thy best affections—he who gives
“ This counsel is thy friend : believe and live.”
[*he returns the paper to Cof.*

Laod. I freeze with horror !

Cof. What inhuman pity
Thus, thus to save me ! From a hand unknown
The warning comes, but points not out the guilty.
Then must I ever fear my friends, my sons ?

La

In every cup believe my death conceal'd,
And see the cruel threat in every sword?
Is this to be preserv'd? Is this to live?

Sir. [*apart.*] Unhappy father!

Med. [*aside.*] Lose not now, my soul,
This fair occasion.

Cof. Still, Medarfes, silent?
Laodice, thou dost not speak.

Laod. Alas!
I'm struck with terror.

Med. If I spoke not yet,
I wish'd to hide the guilty from your anger,
The guilty dear to both; but when I see
The cruel anguish of a father's heart,
I can no longer hold—that paper's mine.

Sir. [*apart.*] Infidious falsehood!

Cof. Know'st thou then the traitor,
And yet conceal'st him from my just resentment?

Med. [*kneels.*] O father most lov'd! forgive
the guilty;

Let it suffice, thy life has been preserv'd:
Ah! think not ever in such blood to stain
Your royal hands: know, he who seeks your life
Is your own son—and your Medarfes' brother!

Sir. [*apart.*] Must I be silent still?

Cof. Medarfes, rise:
What tongue to thee reveal'd the dreadful secret?

Med.

Med. Siroes himself disclos'd it.

Laod. [*aside.*] Can it be !

What heart would have conceiv'd it ?

Med. Long he tried

To make me partner in his crime—I pleaded,
I begg'd; but all in vain, he vow'd your death ;
And hence Medarſes in that ſcroll reveal'd
The dire deſign.

Sir. [*discovers himſelf.*] Medarſes is a traitor :
That paper's mine.

Med. [*aside.*] O Heaven !

Laod. [*aside.*] What do I ſee ?

Coſ. Ha ! Siroes here, conceal'd in my apart-
ment !

Med. His guilt is clear.

Sir. 'Tis falſe : deſire to ſave
Your threaten'd life, my father, brought me hither :
A deſperate foe, unknown, deſigns your death,
And you're betray'd.

S C E N E XIV.

Enter EMIRA.

Em. [*entering.*] And who betrays my king ?
In his defence behold this arm and ſword.

Sir. There wanted but Hydaspes to complete
The wretchedneſs of Siroes.

Coſ.

Cof. [*to Em.*] See, my friend,
To what has Heaven reserv'd me. [*gives the paper.*

Laod. Strange events !

Em. [*having read the paper returns it.*] Whence
: came this warning ? Is the traitor known ?

Med. Medarfes has reveal'd the whole.

Sir. My brother
Deceives thee, good Hydaspes, know 'twas I
Disclos'd the secret.

Cof. Wherefore then forbear
To name the affassin ?

Sir. Thus far have I spoke,
But dare not utter further.

Em. O ! perfidious !
And would'st thou thus conceal thy impious
treason

With virtue's thin disguise ? A friend to none,
The offender nor the offended ; both betray'd.
The monarch is not safe ; the stroke design'd
By thee prevented ; now thou com'st to boast
The warning given in that ambiguous paper.
Yes, traitor, I would fain—[*to Cof.*] forgive, my
king,

This warmth of temper : 'tis my duty speaks :
As loyalty has bound me to the father,
So far respect is wanting to the son :
Your danger is my own.

Laod. [*aside.*] What noble daring!

Cof. What do I owe to thee, belov'd Hydaspes?
[*to Sir.*] Learn, learn, ingrate, behold a stranger
born;

The blood of Cofroes circles in thy veins:
To him I gave my favour, thee thy life,
And yet behold he stands to guard my safety,
While thy insidious arts invade my throne.

Sir. I dare no further plead in my defence,
And yet I am not guilty.

Med. Innocence
Is ever bold, nor keeps a fullen silence;
Medarfes freely speaks.

Em. [*to Sir.*] Away: what now
Employs thy thoughts? What dost thou? He
who goes

So far, would doubtless soon complete his purpose;
Thou answer'st not: I know thou art confus'd;
It galls thee now to find thy heart reveal'd,
And all thy falsehood open'd to Hydaspes;
And hence thy silence, hence thy looks of shame,
And hence that fear to cast thine eyes on mine.

Sir. [*aside.*] There wanted but Hydaspes to
complete
The wretchedness of Siroes.

Cof. Yes, Medarfes,
His silence justifies the imputed guilt.

Med. Medarfes truly spoke.

Em. But Siroes' lips
Are fraught with falsehood.

Sir. 'Tis too much, Hydaspes,
And shall not this suffice? What would'st thou
more?

Em. Do thou from anxious doubts relieve my
king.

Sir. What can I say?

Em. Say? That thy crime is mine,
Say that, with thee, I'm partner in the guilt;
Or rather say that all the guilt is mine,
And thine the loyalty: for this, and more
A mind like his might feign. [to Cofroes.

Cof. But fruitless all.

'Tis not an easy task to impose on Cofroes:
I know thy truth too well. [to Em.

Em. O! would to heaven
That Siroes' loyal faith could equal mine!

Cof. I know him too—all, all proclaims him
traitor;
He neither makes defence, nor sues for pardon.

Sir. I can no further plead my hapless cause,
And yet I'm innocent.

Med. Is he not guilty,
Who could refuse but now a solemn oath
To calm a father's peace?

Laod. Is he not guilty,
Who cherish'd in his breast presumptuous love?

Cof. Is he not guilty, whom myself I found
Conceal'd in secret here?

Em. Is he not guilty,
Who first could claim this paper as his own,
And when I press'd him close with words of truth,
Stood mute and terrified?

Sir. All, all conspire
To fix my guilt, and yet I'm innocent.

What foes like these, alas! combin'd,
Could ruthless Fortune send?
To judge me and condemn I find
A cruel fair and brother join'd,
A father and a friend.

I see all present help is vain,
All hope from future time;
Yet that I still my truth retain,
Is made my only crime.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E XV.

COSROES, EMIRA, MEDARSES, LAODICE.

Cof. Ho!—let the prince be watch'd.

[*to the guards without.*

Em. Myself will keep
Your royal person safe.

Med.

Med. Why fears my father,
Enclos'd with faithful friends, a single traitor ?

Laod. You are too deeply mov'd.

Cof. And who can tell
What friend is true ; or know what snare is laid ?

Em. You fear not me, my lord.

Cof. No, dear Hydaspes,
On thy untainted faith I trust my all :
Search deep this treason, and defend in Cosroes
A prince that loves thee.

Em. Nor can Cosroes trust
His peace to one, who bears a heart more loyal :
If all his aid, his counsel nought avail,
Hydaspes, jealous of his truth and honour,
Will shed his dearest blood in your defence.

Cof. Thus while I lose a son, I find a friend.

Fate hovers, like a rushing tide,
That from the cliff descends :
But thou, dear youth, shalt turn aside
The ruin that impends.

Near and more near the dangers threat,
And, doubtful where to fly,
If e'er thy faith a king forget,
On whom shall he rely ?

[*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E XVI.

EMIRA, MEDARSES, LAODICE.

Med. Who would have thought in Siroes e'er
to find

A traitor to his king?

Laod. Or who conceiv'd
A heart so treacherous and a love so daring?

Em. And what can urge these mean unworthy
insults

On one who hears them not? Medarfes surely
Might own some feeling to a brother's name;
And you, Laodice, with more respect
Might judge a prince like him: believe not al-
ways

The unhappy are the guilty.

Med. Does Medarfes
Such pity feel for Siroes?

Laod. Thou to plead
In his behalf?

Med. And didst not thou, Hydaspes,
Till now insult him?

Laod. Say, what cause excites
Thy anger against us?

Em. From me perchance
He might deserve reproach, but not from you.

Med.

Med. So soon to change, and now defend the
man

Whom late you fought to ruin ?

Em. You believe

Hydaspes chang'd, Hydaspes is the same.

Laod. The same ? I know not what your
speech intends.

Med. A mind unchang'd could never dictate
words,

That speak the thoughts so various.

Em. Be it so :

Believe it mystery, but believe it true.

Have you beheld the summer rain
With kindly showers refresh the plain ;
Where, near the purple violet, blows
With tints renew'd the blushing rose ?
Both flowers one soil maternal breeds,
And both one genial moisture feeds.
My heart is one, though now I seem
To absolve the prince and now condemn.
One cause impels me, while by turns
My pity melts, my anger burns.

[*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E XVII.

LAODICE, MEDARSES.

Laod. The words Hydaspes utter'd fure contain
Some strange and hidden sense.

Med. Ah ! little read
In human kind ; and dost thou then believe him ?
Thou shouldst be vers'd in courts ; 'tis ever thus
With him who holds the favour of his prince ;
His artificial plots are hidden secrets :
The less the vulgar comprehend, the more
They worship and admire.

Laod. I cannot think
Hydaspes' meaning such : 'tis true I know not
To what it tends, but whilst I hear him speak,
Like him I change my purpose and my thoughts,
And know not what I hope, or what I fear.

No certain fears my bosom fill,
Nor know I hope sincere ;
And yet in hope I wander still,
And wander still in fear.

I know not why, but stript of rest,
All peace is banish'd from my breast.

[*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E XVIII.

MEDARSES *alone.*

Great are my aims : and thus far well advanc'd
My project shows. The recompense at hand,
Amidst such tumults still I stand unshaken :
He never trusts the sea who fears a storm.

Amidst the storm, while fearful night
Has hid the stars from human fight,
Across the gloom a ray of light
Already fortune shows.

This labour o'er, my care shall cease,
My troubled soul return to peace,
And thoughts of dangers past increase
The sweets of calm repose. [Exit.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

*A royal park.*LAODICE *alone.*

How fatal is the pleasure of revenge !
 Revenge, that follow'd, ends in deep repentance.
 This I too well have prov'd ; for Siroes' danger
 My breast is torn with horror and remorse.

SCENE II.

Enter SIROES.

Sir. At length, Laodice, you are reveng'd
 And Siroes suffers for a fault of yours.

Laod. Ah ! prince belov'd ! such anguish rends
 my bosom,
 I dare not speak.

Sir. And yet, *Laodice*,
 You fear'd not to accuse me.

Laod. Blind resentment
 For your disdain impell'd a jealous woman
 To such detested falsehood : O ! forgive,
 Forgive the madness of a love like mine,
 And let my grief suffice for punishment :

I will

I will disclose the whole, and Cofroes now
Shall know 'twas I——

Sir. Your ruin, that would follow,
Cannot ensure my safety : were I clear'd
Of love to you, a crime of deeper dye
Is charg'd upon me. Cease, Laodice,
Thy pity may awaken new suspicions
Of our imputed loves.

Laod. What shall I do
To merit your forgiveness ? Tell me, Siroes,
Behold me ready now to atone my guilt.

Sir. I blot it from my mind; and if you think
That such oblivion merits some return,
Henceforth forget to love me.

Laod. O ! ye powers !
How can I cease to cherish love like mine ?

In silent anguish will I mourn
The fate I'm doom'd to prove ;
But hope not that this breast forlorn
Can ever cease to love.

Ah ! cruel, what offence if I
Within my heart retain,
The wretched privilege to sigh,
And sigh, alas ! in vain ?

[*Exit.*

Sir. O ! that my words could calm Emira's sanger,
As now they have appeas'd Laodice,

[*going.*

Enter

Enter EMIRA.

Em. Stay, faithless man !

Sir. And cannot yet my sufferings
Suffice thy cruelty ?

Em. And art thou yet
Contented to betray me ?

Sir. Now perchance
Thou com'st again with cruel taunts to insult
A wretched guiltless prince.

Em. And thou perchance,
Now seek'st thy father to reveal the secret
That paper had with-held.

Sir. At least the paper
Offends not thee : the guilt is fix'd on Siroes :
I groan beneath the charge, and yet am silent.

Em. And I, what did I, when I seem'd to insult
And most reproach thee ? Firmly I secur'd
The confidence of Cosroes in my faith,
More for thy safety, than for my revenge.

Sir. Ah ! then, my love, do more for Siroes'
fake ;
Forgive his father ; or at least, if still
You seek revenge, then seek it in this bosom.

Em. I cannot so confound the son and father :
Cosroes I hate, but thee Emira loves ;
I wish but to revenge a parent slain.

Sir. And I, by nature's law, defend my own ;
And justice higher sanctifies the duty
To guard the living than revenge the dead.

Em. Go then—pursue thy nobler enterprise,
And leave to me my own : but know'st thou well
What both our duties claim ? In us, the children
Of foes profess'd, our passion is a crime.
No, we should hate each other : duty bids thee
Reveal my purpose to the ear of Cosroes ;
And duty bids me to prevent discovery.
Thou in Emira should'st behold 'a foe,
Cruel, implacable ; in Siroes I
Detest the unworthy offspring of a tyrant :
Then henceforth let us both be deadly foes.

[going.

Sir. Stay, stay, my life !

Em. And call'st thou me thy life ?
Would'st thou unite the lover with the foe ?
At once thou but betray'st, what nature made thee,
A faithless lover and a feeble foe.

Sir. You wrong me much, my love,—

Em. Be silent—love
Is lost in hatred—speak to me of rage,
Of vengeance speak, and I with pleasure hear thee.

Sir. And must I then—

Em. O ! yes, forget Emira.

Sir. Farewell, Emira, thou wilt have me guilty,
Wilt have me dead—thou shalt be satisfied.

I'll to my father and avow his son b

The secret traitor—thus thy cruelty

Shall be at full appeas'd.

[going.

Em. Hold—go not yet.

Sir. What wouldst thou have? Leave, leave me
to my fate.

Em. Yet hear—to make thee guilty nought
avails

To me or Cofroes.

Sir. 'Tis enough for me
To perish innocent: hear me, Emira,
At length I find I'm more a son than lover;
I can no longer live, and still be silent:
If nothing less can save him from thy fury,
I will disclose the whole.

Em. Go, traitor, go,
Accuse thyself or me. In spite of thee
Thy purpose I'll prevent: then see who most
Will gain belief. [going.

Sir. I see, too cruel maid!
My blood is sought and I will shed the stream,
Now fate thy cruel heart with Siroes' death.
[draws his sword.

SCENE

S C E N E III.

Enter COSROES.

Cof. [*entering sees the sword drawn.*] What dost thou, impious youth?

Em. [*aside.*] O! heavenly Powers!

Cof. Wretch! hast thou drawn thy sword against my friend?

Can'st thou refute this truth? Tho' none beside
Accuses thee, mine eyes are not deceiv'd;
Say that I charge thee falsely.

Sir. All is true:

Yes, I am guilty; I betray my father;
I hate my brother, and insult Hydaspes.
Death, death is my desert: you are unjust
If longer you delay the welcome stroke.
I heed nor Gods nor men, detest myself,
And loath the light of Heaven.

Em. [*aside.*] Ye Powers! defend him.

Cof. Ho! guards! secure the prince.

[*guards enter.*]

Em. He meant not, sir,
Offence to me, but blind with sudden passion,
Perchance against himself design'd the weapon.

Cof. In vain thou seek'st to veil his crime with
arts

Of pious falsehood. Wherefore didst thou fly ?

Em. My flight was not from fear.

Sir. O ! cease, no more :

Hydaspes, cease : my greatest foe is he

Who now would save me ; death, and death alone

Must end my present torment.

Cof. Take thy wish ?

Thou hast few moments, traitor, more to live.

Em. What says my king ? On Siroes' life pro-
long'd

Depends your own : he has not yet confess'd

The accomplice of his crime : with him would die

The important secret.

Cof. True. How much, Hydaspes,
I owe thy love : be ever near me still.

Sir. So may you run perhaps on certain fate :
Who knows but that Hydaspes may betray you ?

Em. Who, I betray him !

Sir. Every one may prove
A foe conceal'd ; take heed nor trust appearance :
Who can discern the traitor ?

Cof. Peace and leave me.

Sir. You think me faithless ; hence alone

The secret pangs I feel :

What tongue can make the traitor known—

[*aside.*] O ! torture to conceal.

A father

A father, hence your son you fend,
And fend with doom severe :
Yet think what dangers now impend,
And O ! to few your trust extend ;
But learn in time to fear. [*Exit guarded.*]

S C E N E IV.

COSROES, EMIRA.

Em. [*aside.*] The king is thoughtful.

Cos. [*to himself.*] From such numerous proofs
I know my son is guilty—yet those words—

Em. [*aside.*] Perhaps his mind begins to admit
suspicions
Suggested thus by Siroes.

Cos. [*to himself.*] Can it be !
Hydaspes to betray me ?

Em. If he once
Suspect my truth, my purpose half is lost.
He heeds me not—We are alone—the time
Now calls upon me—

Cos. He perhaps that's guilty
Accuses him to make his crime the less,
By partnership of treason.

Em. Now, Emira, [*draws her sword.*]
Now slay the victim to thy father's ghost.

S C E N E V.

*Enter MEDARSES.**Med.* My lord.*Em.* [*aside.*] O! heavenly powers!*Med.* Hydaspes, say
What means that weapon?*Em.* At his foot to lay
The pledge of loyalty: there are who durst
Excite his fear of me. My jealous honour
Admits not doubt—Hydaspes deem'd a traitor!
Yes, Siroes here has touched me—Mighty Gods!
Has touch'd my inmost heart, and till this truth
Be deeply search'd, behold me now disarm'd
And Cofroes' prisoner.*Cof.* O! exalted faith!*Med.* Perchance my brother fought another
name
To veil his crime,*Cof.* Hydaspes, to its place
Return thy sword, to wear in my defence.*Em.* Forgive me, when a monarch's life's in
danger

A shadow is a substance; from your mind
Be banish'd first the doubt that wrongs Hydaspes,
Then to its place return the unfullied weapon,
Fit guardian for your safety.

Cof.

Cof. No, Hydaspes,
Resume thy sword.

Em. I must not, Sir, obey you.

Cof. 'Tis my command.

Em. What you command, Hydaspes
No longer dares oppose. But yet permit me
To leave the court, lest new suspicions, rais'd
By envious minds, should taint my innocence.

Cof. No ; 'tis my will Hydaspes should remain
To watch my danger.

Em. I ?

Cof. Yes, thou Hydaspes.

Em. Who can to me ensure the faith of numbers
To whom your life is trusted ? I must stand
Pledg'd for the truth of each—Had I myself
The sole disposal—

Cof. 'Tis enough—in thee
That power be vested : from the royal guards
Take those approv'd the truest : at thy will,
Dispose and change them ; and the care be thine
To find the latent traitor.

Em. I obey
The royal will, and trust no lurking treason
Will long be hidden from my searching eyes.
[*aside.*] My vessel now has nearly reach'd the
port.

From every fear your mind release,
 Compose your beating heart to peace ;
 For you my cares shall never cease :
 Still think me just and true.
 That moment I forget to obey
 The duties claim'd by sovereign sway,
 And wrong my king, may Heaven repay
 The wrong with vengeance due. [Exit.

S C E N E VI.

COSROES, MEDARSES.

Med. 'Tis wondrous, sure, to find such loyalty
 In one a stranger born ; but yet, my king,
 All this suffices not : our destiny
 Demands a stronger pledge.

Cos. Before this day
 Declines, thou shalt be partner in my throne :
 Then little can one madman's pride prevail
 Against the power of two united kings.

Med. Your love to me will but incense him
 more :
 Already Siroes has seduc'd the people,
 And numbers own his cause : seditious threats
 Are heard on every hand.—Alas ! my lord,
 Unless the plant is rooted from the soil,
 It still must grow and spread to our annoyance.
 A remedy is sure—but harsh to speak—

The head once fever'd, faction in the vulgar
Soon loses all its vigour.

Cof. Oh ! my heart
Recoils from such a deed——

Med. 'Tis true, the thought
Congeals my blood.—No other way remains
To ensure your safety, but to pardon Siroes,
And raise him to the throne.—To him, my father,
I gladly yield the now contested sway,
To wander far an exile from my country,
And ease his fears of me : should this be little,
My vital blood shall gladly flow to appease him :
Strike here, and deem me happy in the wound
That renders peace to him who gave me being.

Cof. I feel my eyes o'erflow with tenderness :
Ah ! dear Medarces, let me hold thee thus,
Close to my heart. Why did not Heaven bestow
Two sons like thee !

Med. Alas ! could I refuse
My worthless life to buy your future safety,
I were indeed unworthy such a father.

From you the light of Heaven I drew,
And now I stand prepar'd for you

My life or death to find.

My life, if living I can cure
The anxious pangs you now endure,
Or death, if dying I ensure

Your future peace of mind,

[*Exit.*
SCENE

S C E N E VII.

COSROES *alone.*

No, Cosroes, no—thou canst no longer doubt,
And Siroes is the traitor.—Justice now
Should sentence guilt ; but O ! I cannot fix
My weak resolves ; and midst my deep resentment
A remnant of paternal kindness
Here lingers in my breast and pleads his cause.

With anger and with love oppress'd,
Those tyrants of the human breast,
What foes my peace assail !
While jealousy would guard the throne,
While pity would preserve the son,
All hopes from counsel fail.
This way and that my soul to bend,
The father and the king contend,
While neither can prevail. [Exit.

S C E N E VIII.

Apartments, with a view of the royal gardens.

SIROES *disarmed.* ARAXES.

Ar. He who refuses succour justifies
The rigour of his fate : despair, my prince,
Not

Not virtue makes you thus condemn in me
A zeal that has improv'd the people's favour
In your behalf.

Sir. The stroke of adverse Fate
Is conquer'd by endurance.

Ar. Seldom Fortune
Is friend to merit; and she takes offence
That ever man should more confide in virtue
Than in her partial favours.

Sir. Know, the foul
That warms this bosom would far rather bear
The pangs of suffering innocence than find
Such happiness as follows prosperous guilt.

Ar. That innocence is little priz'd which meets
The world's reproach.—The vulgar from events
Direct their judgment, and believe those guilty
Whom Fortune has depress'd.

Sir. Enough for me
To know myself and die with self-applause.

Ar. Still in despite of this too rigid virtue,
The care be mine to save you from your father,
Unjust and cruel Cosroes: yes, the people,
The squadrons will unite in such a cause.

Sir. But this is surely treason, not defence.

Ar.

Ar. Since you, though innocent, would lose
That aid a friend supplies :
To meet the conflict you refuse,
My valour shall suffice ;
And few the treason will accuse
By which a traitor dies. [Exit.

S C E N E IX.

SIROES, MEDARSES.

Med. Alone, my brother ?

Sir. I have ever with me
The sad society of adverse Fortune.

Med. Thy happiness is surely now secur'd.
This instant Cosroes will be here : perchance
He comes to give thee comfort.

Sir. See what comfort
My destiny has sent : instead of Cosroes
Medarses comes.

Med. Yes, doubtless 'tis thy wish
Without a witness to receive thy father :
So might'st thou practise every soothing art
To varnish o'er thy guilt ; but could thy folly
E'er hope Medarses would consent to this ?

Sir. Thou art deceiv'd : as gladly would I speak
When thou art present : he who knows not guilt
Ne'er

Ne'er feels the glow of shame.—In seeing thee,
It only grieves me to reflect our blood
Flow'd from one common spring.

Med. I ask no virtues
But royalty and empire.

S C E N E X.

Enter COSROES and EMIRA.

Cof. [*entering.*] Guard, Hydaspes;
The entrance here, and let Laodice
Be near to wait my bidding.

Em. I obey. [*retires apart.*]

Cof. Medarfes, leave us.

Med. Must I leave you, sir?
And should I be accus'd, what friend will then
Defend my innocence?

Cof. I will defend it.

Sir. [*to Med.*] Remain, if so thou wilt.

Cof. [*to Sir.*] No, I would first
Converse with thee alone.

Med. And can you, sir,
Intrust yourself with him?

Cof. Enquire no further:
Leave us, Medarfes.

Med. I obey; but yet——

Cof

Cof. No more, Medarfes—go—retire awhile.

Med. [*aside.*] My cruel fortune now begins to frown.
[*Exit.*]

S C E N E XI.

COSROES, SIROES. EMIRA *apart.*

Cof. Sit, Siroes, now, and listen while I speak.
[*sits.*]

Behold I come a father or a judge,
Even as thyself would'ſt chooſe me. If a father,
Then mark how far my clemency extends;
Or, if a judge, obſerve how well with thee
I can ſupport the duty.

Sir. Siroes fears not
The name of judge, and venerates the father.
[*sits.*]

Cof. May I expect the obedience of a ſon
To one command? Speak not till I have finiſh'd—
But hear me with reſpect.

Sir. I promiſe, ſir,
Till you permit my ſpeech, to attend in ſilence.

Em. [*hearing them.*] What would he ſay?

Cof. I ſee thee, Siroes, guilty
Of many crimes; but let me firſt recall them
To thy remembrance. I from thee requir'd
An oath that might ſecure the kingdom's peace,
And this thou didſt reſuſe. I pardon'd thee,

And

And thou, ungrateful, didst abuse my mercy.
A paper told me that some traitor lurk'd
Amongst my dearest friends ; and while my mind
Was labouring with suspense and anxious terror,
I found thee, then conceal'd in my apartment.
What would I more ? Medarfes has himself
Reveal'd thy crimes——

Sir. And can you, fir, believe——

Cof. Observe thy promise, hear me and be
silent.

Em. [*to herself*] Unhappy prince !

Cof. All vent complaints against thee,
Thou hast scoff'd at all decorum in the court ;
And from thy insolence is none secure.
Medarfes bears thy insults ; and thy love
Has rashly dar'd to affront Laodice,
Nay offer threats ; and even, before my eyes,
Thou wouldst have slain Hydaspes. Add to these
The people's murmurs rais'd against my peace,
Excited first by thee——

Sir. Ah ! falsehood all !

Cof. Observe thy promise, hear me and be silent.
Behold me now, provok'd by such excesses,
As if compell'd to sentence thee ; and yet
I pardon all, and blot them from remembrance.
Come then, my son, let us again revive
The love of child and parent. Name the traitor,
Or those that share his treason : from the offender

An injur'd father claims no recompense
But penitence sincere and future truth.

Em. [to herself.] I see that Siroes now is
greatly mov'd :

Alas ! should he betray me——

Sir. O ! my lord,
I cannot speak

Cof. Then hear me,—Dost thou fear
For him that's guilty ? Know thy fear is vain,
If thou art he, confession to a father
Absolves the crime and smoothes thy path to
empire ;

But if thou art not he, disclose his name
And freely I forgive him. If thou wilt,
Receive this royal hand, the pledge of pardon.

Em. [*aside.*] Alas ! I fear.

Sir. O ! could I surely know
Your justice never would pursue the treason,
I might reveal——

Em. [*interrupting them hastily.*] Does not my
lord remember
That now Laodice awaits his leisure ?

Sir. [*aside.*] O ! Heavens ! what means she
here ?

Cof. [to *Em.*] I know it well :
Retire Hydaspes.

Em. I obey my sovereign.

[*aside*

[*aside to Sir.*] Perfidious ! dare not now betray
my secret. [*retires.*]

Sir. [*aside.*] Cruel Emira !

Cof. [*to Sir.*] Siroes, speak, retrieve
My past affections.—Still, still art thou silent ?
Why art thou thus disturb'd ?

Sir. O ! Heaven !

Cof. I see
Thou canst not bear to hear without emotion
Laodice but nam'd. In this, my son,
Thou shalt be happy : I will here prevent
Thy warmest wishes ; I confess my weakness ;
I love Laodice, (with shame I own it,)
And yet to thee resign her : only speak,
Disclose the hidden snare, secure my peace,
And take her for thy bride.

Sir. You would not, sir,
Believe your son——

Em. [*interrupting them.*] Laodice impatient
Has press'd to be admitted ; and in fear
She might intrude upon your privacy,
I have dismiss'd her hence.

Cof. And is she gone ?

Em. She is, my king.

Cof. Go, haste and call her back.

Em. I go, my lord——Thou wilt not sure be-
tray me ? [*aside to Sir.*]

Sir.

Sir. [*aside.*] What anguish do I suffer ?

Cof. Speak, my son,
Laodice is thine—What would'st thou more ?
I see thee still in doubt.

Sir. I never lov'd
Laodice—and yet I must not speak.

Cof. [*rising.*] Perfidious ! now too plain I read
thy purpose,
To live a traitor and a traitor die.
What could'st thou further ask ? I seal thy pardon,
Invite thee to my throne, and to thy arms
Resign a maid, the object of my love ;
Yet all will not suffice. My death, my blood,
I know thou long hast sought. Unworthy son !
Indulge thy wish : behold me here before thee,
Unguarded and alone—Inhuman ! now,
Disarm me now, and plunge the weapon here.

[*points to his breast.*]

Em. [*interposing.*] What cause excites such
anger in my king ?
I must not leave you thus without defence ?
Behold me here.

Cof. Go, bring Laodice.

[*Exit Emira.*]

SCENE

S C E N E XII.

COSROES, SIROES.

Sir. My lord, if e'er I lov'd Loadice,
May Heaven in justice——

Cof. Do not tempt the Gods
Again with perjuries.

S C E N E XIII.

Enter LAODICE, and EMIRA.

Laod. I come, my lord,
Obedient to your summons.

Cof. Hear me, Siroes,
'Tis the last time : once more I offer mercy.
Speak and ascend the throne ; and with the throne
Possess Laodice ; but if thou still
Persist in silence, in a dungeon's gloom
Expect thy death. Hydaspes, in my stead,
Shall here be present, name to him the traitor,
I leave thee for awhile, do thou improve
The few remaining moments ; but if then
Thou see'st the thunder fall, the fault is thine
That hast refus'd to avert the impending stroke.

By

By thee my pity now is flown,
My breast with rage on flame ;
And, traitor, 'tis by thee alone
I bear a tyrant's name.

Thou can'st not say the guilt is mine,
That sentence waits on thee :
O ! no, ingrate, 'tis only thine
And not the king's decree. [Exit.

S C E N E XIV.

SIROES, EMIRA, LAODICE.

Sir. [to himself.] On what shall I resolve ?

Em. Ye happy lovers,
Hydaspes joys to see your fortune smile.
O ! what has future time in store for Persia
From such an union ; should the rising offspring
Reflect the mother's charms and father's virtues ?

Sir. [to himself.] And does she mock me too ?

Laod. May favouring Heaven
Improve the gladfome omen ! Silent still ?
He seems irresolute and lost in thought.

Em. [to Sir.] Speak, for 'twere madness longer
to dissemble.

Sir. O ! Heavens !—Away and leave me.

Em. Well thou know'st

The

The king has charg'd thee in Hydaspes' presence
To choose a prison or Laodice.

Laod. On what wilt thou resolve ?

Sir. I leave Hydaspes
To fix my choice : his will shall be my law.
Meantime I go, amidst my chains, to expect
What fate determines next.

Em. I know not, prince——

Sir. Thou hast known enough to torture me
till now,

[*aside.*] And may Emira share the pangs I suffer.

My breast a thousand passions rend,
A thousand racking doubts contend :—
On thee my last resolves depend ; [*to Em.*
To rule my heart is thine.
Say, must I now for death prepare ?
At your command my fate I dare :
Or should you bid me woo the fair,
Your will, alas ! is mine. [*Exit.*

S C E N E XV.

EMIRA, LAODICE.

Em. [*aside.*] How shall I now address Laodice ?

Laod. Hydaspes, on the sentence of thy lips
My happiness and Persia's fate depend.

Em. It seems that unconstrain'd Laodice
Would give herself in marriage ties to Siroes.

Laod. That were indeed a bliss.

Em. You love him then ?

Laod. My fondest thoughts are his.

Em. And do you hope
His hand will ever——

Laod. Yes, by thee I hope
To see it given to mine.

Em. Your hopes are vain.

Laod. And wherefore, say ?

Em. Shall I disclose my secret ?

Laod. With freedom speak.

Em. I am myself a lover ;
Forgive my boldness—I adore your beauties.

Laod. Mine, mine, Hydaspes ?

Em. Yours, Laodice ?

Ah ! who unmov'd could view those locks of
gold,

Those roseate cheeks, and lips of coral hue,
That ivory breast, and those soft-beaming eyes ?

Ah ! should you doubt what flame consumes my
heart

Look in this face and read my passion there.

Laod. And silent yet till now——

Em. Till now respect

Refrain'd my tongue.

Laod. Then mark me well, Hydaspes,
I never can return thy love.

Em. O ! Heaven !
Too cruel fair.

Laod. If it be true thou lov'st me,
Be friend to my affections ; give to me,
With virtue that becomes thy noble nature,
The prince belov'd.

Em. You claim too much from virtue.

Laod. Siroes is lost.

Em. Heaven guards the innocent.

Laod. If hope to thee should feign thou hast
my pity,
Know hope deceives thee

Em. Can you be so cruel ?

Laod. My cruelty was taught me by Hy-
daspes.

Em. O ! give me patience, Heaven !

Laod. Yes, while I live,
I'll hate thee still, nor shalt thou e'er have cause
To scoff at my misfortunes.

Em. Yet one comfort
At least remains—both share the pangs of love.

Laod. When safe in port my vessel rides,
 You drive me back to stormy tides,
 And sink me in the main.
 But love may give you soon to know
 An equal share of equal woe,
 Such woe as I sustain.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E XVI.

EMIRA alone.

Such various shapes, as love and hatred sway,
 I take by turns, that oft my mind perplex'd
 In passion's maze, scarce knows its own design.
 I hate the tyrant, and to take his life
 Would fingly little fear a thousand bands
 Of foes in arms : but then the thought recurs
 That he is father to the man I love.
 Yes, Siroes is myself, and O ! with grief
 I see his danger which myself have caus'd :
 But when I think he is the tyrant's son,
 O ! then my heart is rent with secret anguish,
 Alike in hatred, and in love unhappy.

Why was not I by Heaven decreed,
 A shepherdess to tread the plain ?
 My bosom then no cares would breed,
 But care my tender lambs to feed
 And join in love some simple swain.

But princes, born in regal state,
Still find their fortune insincere ;
Since near the throne for ever wait
In ambush plac'd—Deceit and Fear.
[*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

A C T III. S C E N E I.

A court yard.

COSROES, ARAXES.

Cof. Araxes, he must die : enough till now
Has nature pleaded for him in this bosom,

Ar. Who will ensure you, sir, that, Siroes dead,
The people will not seek to avenge his death ?
And that the means employ'd to quell the tumults,
May not increase them ?

Cof. Be it thine, Araxes,
With vigorous secrecy to oppose the plans
Of these seditious ; and to them be shewn,
The sever'd head of my degenerate son.
Soon shalt thou see rebellion's current dried
When once the fountain fails.

Ar. Before we prove
A remedy like this, we may employ
Some other not so dreadful.

Cof. And what other
Remains untried ? Hydaspes and myself
Have toil'd, and toil'd in vain,—this rebel son
Thirsts for my blood, refuses every gift,
And still persists in obstinate concealment.

Ar.

Ar. Then must I, - O ! my liege——

Cof. Yes, go—Araxes,

His death is needful for me ; I pronounce
The fatal sentence—but, O Heaven ! I feel
My heart congeal'd, my eyes o'erflow'd with tears,
And shedding Siroes' blood I shed my own.

Ar. With anguish I obey ; but yet, my lord,
I will obey : 'tis true I'm Siroes' friend,
But I am Cosroes' subject : well my heart,
My loyal heart knows what that name implies,
That all must yield before its sacred duties.

To keep a loyal subject's name

Your blood I cruel shed :

Whene'er a monarch's peace may claim

A guilty rebel's head,

We praise the tyrant's law, and blame

The heart to pity bred.

[*Exit.*

S E C N E II.

COSROES alone.

Before I prov'd the frowns of angry Heaven,
I then was blest in life and blest in empire :
But to preserve them, since my heart must suffer
A punishment so dreadful, life and empire
Are both a burden.

SCENE

S C E N E III.

Enter LAODICE.

Laod. Haste, my king! the palace
Is now encompass'd by a rebel-band.
That call for Siroes.

Cof. They shall have their wish:
They shall—already to a faithful arm
His death is given in charge: perhaps even now
Through many a wound his treacherous soul is fled,
And thus I give him to his friends.

Laod. O Heaven!
Wretched Laodice!—What have you done?

[*to Cof.*

Cof. What have I done? Aveng'd offended
 majesty,
Aveng'd offended love, thy wrongs and mine.

Laod. O! you are deceiv'd! Reverse the cruel
 order,
The prince has never injur'd you in love—
'Twas falsehood, falsehood all.

Cof. What say'st thou—ha!

Laod. In vain I strove to win the heart of Siroes,
Till fir'd with rage, to punish his disdain,
I forg'd the tale.

Cof. Hast thou betray'd me too?

Laod.

Laod. Yes, Cosroes, here behold the criminal :
Let me be slain, but let the guiltless live.

Cos. What, guiltless ! he who fought a father's
life ?

Who kindled in thy breast the flame of love ?
He's guilty, guilty of the worst of treason ;
Guilty of pleasing thee—and he shall die.

Laod. To obtain the life of a devoted son,
And from a father, was a gift so mighty
I ought not to have hop'd it.—What avail
These hapless charms, that fail to move your pity ?
You never lov'd me, 'twas deception all.

Cos. Ungrateful maid ! I lov'd thee but too
well :

I meant to seat thee on the Persian throne ;
Nor is this all : within my bosom brood
A thousand cares : I know that thou art false,
And yet, (O ! shame to think !) I could confess
That many pangs I feel are caus'd by thee.

Laod. Then yield, my lord, to my entreaties
yield :

O ! save the prince, and let my death appease you,
Most happy if my blood——

Cos. Laodice,
Depart : by seeking thus to save his life,
'Thou mak'st his guilt the more—thy suit offends
me.

Laod.

Laod. The tigers see by nature stung,
 When danger threatens near,
 Impetuous flies to guard her young
 Against the hunter's spear.

I ne'er like thine a heart have known,
 No love can there reside ;
 Nor pity can in him be shown.
 By whom a son has died.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E IV.

COSROES alone.

Now let us see how far my fate will urge
 Her barbarous rigour : yes, I'll meet it all.

S C E N E V.

Enter EMIRA.

Em. O fir ! release the prince, restore him now
 To appease the furious people : threatening loud
 On every hand, with undistinguish'd cries
 They vent their maddening rage, and in a moment
 From shouting multitudes resounds the name
 Of Siroes.

Cof. Is the tumult then so high ?

Em. The lowest of the vulgar now assume

The

The pride of rebels ; in ten thousand hands
Ten thousand falchions flash ; and such the frenzy
That creeping age and timorous childhood fly
With arms and weapons to supply the strong.

Cof. Resist the tumult yet some moments longer
And I no more shall fear it.

Em. Say, what mean
My sovereign's words ?

Cof. Already is Araxes
Dispatch'd by my command to slay my son.

Em. And could'st thou thus resolve—revoke,
O Heaven !

The fatal sentence—I myself will go
The harbinger of mercy—give me, fir,
The royal signet.

Cof. Thou in vain demand'st it :
His death must be my safety.

Em. O ! how chang'd
Art thou from Cosroes ! where are now the virtues
That grac'd thee once, companions in the throne ?
Ah ! what will Persia say, and what the world ?
Cosroes till now the idol of his subjects,
And terror of his foes ; whose conquering arms,
By wealthy Ganges and the fertile Nile,
The furthest Ind and Æthiop's tawny sons
Admir'd and fear'd ? O ! think what thou hast
lost,

In one dread moment ! If thou canst forget

The

The laws of nature thus, one fatal act
Blots all thy glories—Still, O ! still reflect,
Yet, yet recall——

Cof. But Siroes is a traitor.

Em. But Siroes is your son, a son that ever
Was worthy you, who from his father's deeds
Has learn'd so well to triumph : yet a child
Cosroes in him avow'd his hope and joy.
Oft have I heard that, when array'd in arms,
You fought the foe, or came victorious home,
His was the parting and returning kiss ;
While playful he stretch'd out his little hands
To clasp a father's neck, and fearless smil'd
To see the dazzling helm and nodding plume.

Cof. How hast thou wak'd remembrance !

Em. Yet this son
Is doom'd to death, and doom'd, O ! Heaven ! by
whom ?
A father's voice.

Cof. I can resist no longer——

Em. O ! if my service ever claim'd reward,
O ! let not Siroes perish. Send me hence
Resolve—a moment more the deadly stroke
May then be past recall.

Cof. Here, take my signet,
And fly to save him.

Em. O ! transporting sounds.

[*going meets Araxes.*

SCENE

S C E N E VI.

*Enter ARAXES.**Em.* Araxes, Heavens!*Cof.* With anguish in his looks—

O! Gods!

Em. Speak, lives the prince?*Ar.* He lives no longer.*Em.* O! Siroes!*Cof.* O! my son!*Ar.* At once he fell,

And by a single stroke : his generous soul

One moment linger'd on his dying lips

To cry—"Araxes, guard my father's life—"

Then fled for ever.

Cof. O! support me, Heaven!

Hydaspes, O! I faint!

Em. Inhuman! thou!

Dost thou lament! and who has murder'd Siroes?

Say, barbarous man! of whom dost thou complain?

Go, tyrant! go, and from his bosom rend

The heart still panting; fate thy rage with blood,

With filial blood! a spectacle of horror,

The stain of Persia and the world's abhorrence!

Cof.

Cof. Is this Hydaspes speaks ? has frenzy seiz'd
him,
Or does he feign this madness ?

Em. Till this hour
He feign'd indeed, but feign'd till time should
serve
To pierce the heart of Cosroes.

Cof. How has Cosroes
Deserv'd thy hatred ?

Em. Impious ! how deserv'd ?
Hast thou not murder'd now my plighted lord ?
By thee I've lost a father, and by thee
Have liv'd an exile from my rightful throne.
Behold in me thy foe—I am Emira.

Cof. What do I hear !

Ar. O ! wonderful discovery !

Cof. Now do I know, who 'twas seduc'd my son.

Em. 'Tis true, I tried, but vainly tried to shake
His faith to thee—this learn for my revenge.
And know, perfidious ! from Emira's hatred
He watch'd thy safety : know 'twas he who plac'd
That warning paper : know, 'tis he who dies
A guiltless victim ; know, that each suspicion,
And charge against this truth was falsehood all.
Go—think, and if thou can'st in peace repose.

Cof. Araxes, let her be reserv'd in chains
To satiate my resentment.

Ar.

Ar. I obey.

[*to Em.*] Resign thy sword.

Em. My hand alone disarms me:
There—take my weapon. [*gives her sword to*
Arax. who goes out and returns with
a guard

[*to Cof.*] Be not thou deceiv'd
To hope that threats can terrify Emira.

Cof. Leave me, ingrate! society like thine
But adds to what I feel.

Em. Let Cosroes' guilt,
Without my aid, suffice to make him wretched,
[*Exit guarded.*

S C E N E VII.

COSROES, ARAXES.

Cof. Where am I! cruel, cruel recollection!
Do I yet live?

Ar. Take comfort, dear my lord:
Think what may now preserve your threaten'd
empire;
Think of your own repose.

Cof. I hope for none.
My subjects are my enemies, and Fate
Is arm'd against me. Heaven has not a star
That shines on Cosroes with propitious beams;
And I myself am now my worst of foes.

Through

Through every vein benumb'd with cold,
I feel the lazy current roll'd,
And, hovering round, with dread behold
A murder'd son's lamented shade.
And now alas ! too late I find,
By me to cruel death consign'd,
A youth the noblest of his kind,
A heart by every virtue sway'd. [Exit.

Ar. Bring back the prisoner.
[*Emira brought in by the guards.*

S C E N E, VIII.

ARAXES, EMIRA.

Ar. Now, benignant stars !
Succeed my great designs. Retire.
[*to the guards who go out.*

Em. What would
An impious king's more wicked minister ?
Must I prepare for death ?

Ar. No, mighty princess ;
Live and preserve yourself for him you love,
Your plighted lord—for know that Siroes lives,

Em. Is't possible ?

Ar. I gladly from the king
Receiv'd the fatal charge ; but 'twas to employ
The means to save him.

Em.

Em. Wherefore from the father,
Repentant of the deed, conceal his safety?

Ar. Because to me it seem'd his pity rose,
As fear subsided: should he now be told
That Siroes lives, his pity might again
Be chang'd to fear: for pity sways no more
When stronger fear prevails: the first is rais'd
By other's pains, the second by our own.

Em. But where is Siroes?

Ar. He in chains expects
His speedy death.

Em. Hast thou not yet enfur'd
The prince's safety?

Ar. I must first collect
My faithful friends securely to conduct him,
Where now the impatient people wait his presence;
And since the father thinks him dead, with ease
We may complete our purpose.

Em. Let us hence— [going.]
But ah! Medarfes comes.

Ar. Be not dismay'd,
I will depart: do you awhile remain,
And learn what next the treacherous prince designs:
Fear not—be constant.

Em. I confide in thee. [Exit Araxes.]

S C E N E IX.

EMIRA, MEDARSES.

Em. What cause disturbs you, fir ?

Med. All is in tumult,
And would'st thou have me unconcern'd Hy-
daspes ?

Em. [*aside.*] As yet he knows me not. [*to Med.*]
Then let us hence
To oppose these daring rebels.

Med. Other succour
Our danger claims—I hasten now to Siroes.

Em. And mean'st thou then to free the unwor-
thy author
Of all our evils ?

Med. Think me not so senseless—
I go to take his life.

Em. I heard that Siroes
Had breath'd his last.

Med. Ha ! dead ! by whom, Hydaspes ?

Em. I know not whom, for doubtful and
confus'd
To me the rumour came. And thou, Medarfes,
Didst thou not hear ?

Med. The tidings never reach'd me.

Em. Then 'twas some fiction by the people
fram'd.

Med. No matter what : alive or dead, it now
Imports me much that Siroes should be found.

Em. I go before thee, and whate'er thy purpose,
Hydaspes will perform—I've heard enough.

[*aside, Exit.*

S C E N E X.

MEDARSES *alone.*

No, if a brother crosses my path to empire,
He must not live : though nature shrinks to act,
Necessity compels it. Time that presses,
Big with furrounding evils, leaves me now
No other means, and in the last extreme
Of danger, every remedy is just.

Though brother's blood may stain the crown,

Its splendor ne'er decays :

The crime that leads us to the throne,

Condemn'd for ill success alone,

All, when successful, praise.

[*Exit,*

S C E N E XI.

A part of the castle destined for the prison of Siroes.

SIROES *alone.*

I'm weary now of suffering, cruel Gods!
Your anger longer : what to me avail
My innocence and virtue ? While the loyal
Remain deprest'd, the traitor is exalted.
If thus Astræa weighs the deeds of men,
Or chance must rule, or innocence is guilt.

S C E N E XII.

Enter EMIRA.

Em. [*entering.*] Araxes truly spoke, my Siroes
lives.

Sir. Emira ! say, how hast thou gain'd admit-
tance

Amidst my rigorous guards ?

Em. This royal signet
Procured me entrance.

Sir. Whence didst thou receive it ?

Em. From Cosroes' self.

Sir If to conclude my woes,
My father chooses thee his minister ;

For

For such a death, to die by hands so lov'd,
I pardon all the malice of my fate.

Em. Then hear and judge Emira——

S C E N E XIII.

Enter MEDARSES.

Med. [*entering.*] Fear not, guards,
The king has sent me.

Em. O! ye Powers!

Med. Hydaspes
Already here, and here without thy sword
In my defence?

Em. But now, upon my entrance,
The guards disarm'd me—Would to Heaven
Araxes

Were yet arriv'd! [*aside looking out.*]

Sir. And does Medarses come
Again to insult me? On what distant shore
Can Siroes hide him from a faithless brother?

Med. Peace, or thou diest. [*draws his sword.*]

Em. The guilty little suffer
In meeting death they wish: some moments still
Suspend the stroke: reflection then will shew him
Its utmost horrors: I meantime may vent
My hatred in reproaches: well you know
He is my foe, that even within the palace

His

His sword was drawn against Hydaspes' life.

Sir. Must I endure all this ?

Em. [*aside.*] O ! would to Heaven,
Araxes were arriv'd ! [*looking out.*]

Sir. And can Hydaspes,
Forgetting faith and friendship, join a traitor ?

Med. Peace or thou diest.

Sir. Kill, kill me, cruel man ;
The death were doubly welcome, that remov'd
Such objects now, so painful to my sight.

Med. Die then—my heart recoils. [*aside.*]

Em. [*aside.*] Help, mighty Gods !

Med. [*aside.*] I feel, I know not how, some
secret horror

Unnerve my arm.

Sir. Barbarian ! why this pause ?

Em. [*aside.*] And yet he comes not.
[*looking out.*]

Med. [*aside.*] What unmans me thus ?

Em. [*to Med.*] Thy colour changes : to my
hand resign

The weapon, and by me shall justice pierce
His treacherous heart. Hydaspes can alone
Exact revenge for those his deeds have wrong'd.

Med. There, use it in my stead.

[*gives the sword to Em.*]

Sir.

Sir. [*to Em.*] And am I then
So hateful to thee ?

Em. [*to Sir.*] Now, thou false-one, see
What hope for thy escape——Defend thyself,
My dearest Siroes !—this shall guard thy life.
[delivers him the sword.]

Med. What hast thou done, Hydaspes ? Wilt
thou thus
Betray me, him who trusts his all to thee ?

Em. No ! thou art deceiv'd ; no longer I'm
Hydaspes—
Behold in me Emira.

Sir. Ha ! what means
Emira now ?

Med. Ah ! traitors ! at my voice
The guards shall seize on both.

Sir. Peace or thou diest. *[threatens him.]*

SCENE XIV.

Enter ARAXES, and Guards.

Ar. Haste, Siroes, haste.

Med. Defend thy lord, Araxes.

Ar. Araxes comes but in defence of Siroes.

Med. Perfidious traitor ! [*to Sir.*] All Selucia
yields

To your command : then let us not delay,

But

But with your preſence cheer your faithful friends.
The paſſage now is free ; and theſe I leave
For your protection : come and learn, my prince,
What I till now have wrought for your deli-
verance. *[Exit. Guards remain.]*

S C E N E XV.

SIROES, EMIRA, MEDARSES, *Guards.*

Med. O ! Heavens ! all, all forſake me !

Em. Let us go,
My deareſt Siroes, nor neglect the good
By favouring fortune given : purſue my ſteps,
Behold the path that leads you to the throne.

Sir. Is it then true, thou treaſure of my ſoul,
That thou no longer now art Siroes' foe ?
What torture did I feel to think thee falſe ?

Em. And couldſt thou ever doubt Emira's
truth ?

Sir. Forgive me, beſt belov'd, but Siroes lives
A wretch ſo hateful now to every ſtar ;
What elſe might ſeem impoſſible, if leagu'd
Againſt my peace, I can believe it all.

Em. Think not thoſe eyes ſhall ever ceaſe
'To rule Emira's heart ;
Nor think that I would wound thy peace,
With wiles of female art.

Thoſe

Those eyes, whose power could first inspire
The flame my breast retains,
Shall nourish there the gentle fire,
While vital breath remains. [Exit.

S C E N E XVI.

SIROES, MEDARSES, *Guards*.

Med. O! Siroes, I confess the rightful fate
From which, in me, you have preserv'd a traitor;
And more, believe me, I detest the guilt
Than fear the punishment. Ascend the throne.
But first, as here I stand without defence,
Cut short this wretched being.

Sir. Take thy sword: [gives his sword.
Live still, in this embrace receive my pardon.

Do thou, with better faith, restore
A brother's love, I ask no more,
No more the past review.
Expect a purer peace of mind,
Since now thy foot, from ill declin'd
Shall honour's paths again pursue.

[Exit.

SCENE

S C E N E XVI.

MEDARSES *alone.*

Alas ! I now by sad experience learn
That innocence is still the surest guide.
He who confides in guilt, should Fortune frown,
Has nothing left ; but he who puts his trust
In virtue, though depress'd with every suffering,
Enjoys life's sovereign blessing, peace of mind.

A torrent foul that deeper grows,
While wintry storms its waves supply ;
No longer swell'd by melting snows,
And mountain floods, more slowly flows,
And leaves at length its channel dry.

The purer stream, that from the veins
Of porous earth derives its source,
Though fed no more by drenching rains,
With waters purified from stains,
Continues still its gentle course.

[*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E XVII.

A great square in Seleucia; a view of the royal palace, with magnificent preparations for the coronation of MEDARSES, which are afterwards used for the coronation of SIROES. At the opening of the scene a skirmish appears between the insurgents and royal guards: the last are defeated and driven off.

COSROES and EMIRA with drawn swords: Cosroes defending himself against some of the conspirators; he falls.

Cof. I am not conquer'd yet.

Em. Forbear, my friends,

This stroke is mine, [advancing on Cosroes.

S C E N E XVIII.

Enter SIROES, his sword drawn.

Sir. [interposing.] Emira, hold! what dost thou?

Fear not, my father, Siroes is your guard.

Em. O! cruel fate! [aside.

Cof. And dost thou live, my son!

Sir. I live, and live to die in your defence.

Cof. And who preserv'd thy life.

SCENE

S C E N E XIX.

Enter ARAXES and people.

Ar. [entering.] 'Twas I preserv'd him.
I wish'd to free the prince, yet keep my truth
Unshaken to my king : your faithful people
Require no more. If Cosroes should refuse
To absolve me for the past, the power is his
To punish my deceit.

Cos. O ! fair deceit !

S C E N E LAST.

Enter MEDARSES, and LAODICE.

Med. My father.

Laod. O ! my king.

Med. [kneels,] Behold Medarſes
Now ſues for pardon, or for puniſhment.

Laod. I 'too am guilty, and ſubmiſſive bend
Before my judge : 'twas I that chiefly rais'd
This cruel tempeſt.

Cos. Siroes is the offended.

Sir. Siroes forgets the offenders and the of-
fence ;

And

And thou, Emira, calm at length thy anger.
Ah ! think how ill the name of foe unites
With her, the object of my soul's affection :
Dismiss thy love, or think no more of vengeance.

Em. I can resist no longer : such example
Of godlike virtue from my breast removes
All former hatred.

Cof. [*to Em.*] Henceforth let the throne
With you for ever prove the seat of peace :
Siroes shall be your spouse.

Em. }
Sir. } O ! happy day !

Cof. Persia, behold your king : from me the
crown
Shall pass to Siroes' head. I gladly here
Resign the charge ; and he whose earliest years
Were spent for you, shall better now sustain,
With vigorous youth, the burden of dominion.

CHORUS.

The man, who knows that peace sincere
Which warms the virtuous breast,
Forgets those passions, rage and fear,
The foes to mortal rest.

If

If nourish'd in the lap of grief,
Our joys can vigour gain ;
This thought should give the wretch relief :
“ That pleasure follows pain.”

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

REGULUS.

MANLIUS, the Consul.

ATTILIA, Daughter to REGULUS.

PUBLIUS, Son to REGULUS.

LICINIUS, Tribune of the People, in love with
ATTILIA.

BARCE, a noble African Lady, a captive to PUBLIUS.

AMILCAR, Ambaffador from Carthage, in love
with BARCE.

SCENE, the SUBURBS of ROME.

R E G U L U S.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

Court yard of a palace belonging to MANLIUS, in the suburbs of Rome. Steps leading to his apartments.

ATTILIA, LICINIUS *from the steps. Lictors and People.*

Lic. My fair Attilia ! Heavens ! I little thought
To find the daughter of our Regulus
Amidst the lictors and Plebeian throngs.

Att. I wait the Consul's coming ~~who~~ would teach
him

At least to blush : 'tis now no time, Licinius,
For timorous forms : five tedious years my father
Has groan'd in Africa a wretched captive :
None seek to obtain his freedom ; I alone
In Rome lament, and dwell upon his sufferings.
If I were silent, who would plead his cause ?

Lic. Ah ! speak not thus unjustly. Where is he
Who does not sigh for his return, and think
All Afric, if subdued, were little gain'd

Should such a citizen be lost to Rome ?
I speak not thus from partial ties to thee :
He is thy father, whom my soul adores :
Beneath his fight I learn'd the use of arms,
And all the Roman virtue that I boast
He first inspir'd.

Att. And yet, alas ! I see not——

Lic. What could I singly do ? 'Twas not the
with

Of blind ambition urg'd me to procure
The power of Tribune : no, by this I hop'd
To give my purpose weight : I now shall call
The general people in the Tribune's name——

Att. Reserve a measure, bold as this, to apply
When all has else been tried : let us not wake
Diffension 'twixt the people and the senate :
Thou know'st too well the jealousy in each
Of sovereign power, by each in turn abus'd :
What one demands, the other still denies.
A milder way remains. I know this instant
From Carthage an ambassador to Rome
Is here expected. In Bellona's temple
The Fathers are assembled to receive him ;
And there the Consul may for Regulus
Propose the ransom.

Lic. Manlius ? O ! remember
He ever has oppos'd thy father's counsels
From earliest years : to trust in him were vain.

Manlius

Manlius his rival ?

Att. Manlius is a Roman,
Nor will pursue his private enmity
With power that station gives him. Let me speak
To Manlius first and hear him.

Lic. Choose at least
Some other place to address him : let not Manlius
Find thee thus mingled with the vulgar herd.

Att. Yes, I would have him see me thus, and
feel
A conscious shame, thus in the public hearing
His audience give, and make me his reply.

Lic. He comes.

Att. Depart, Licinius.

Lic. O ! Attilia,
Not one kind look ?

Att. Remember, O ! Licinius,
I am a daughter, not a lover now.

Lic. A daughter thou, indulge the care
A father's state requires ;
But ah ! forget not quite, my fair,
What faithful love inspires.

Let no offence thy virtue take ;
Attilia may forgive
Her thoughts of him, who for her sake
Alone can wish to live. [Exit.

S C E N E II.

Enter MANLIUS from his apartment.

Att. One moment, Manlius, stay and hear me speak.

Man. Is this a place, Attilia, suits with thee?

Att. It suited not when I could boast a father
Unconquer'd and in freedom: now, alas!
It suits too well the daughter of a slave.

Man. And wherefore com'st thou?

Att. Wherefore am I come?

Ah! say how long, to every nation's wonder,
To Rome's disgrace, has Regulus to languish
In ignominious bonds? Swift pass the days,
The years are heap'd on years, and none remember
He lives in servitude. What crime of his
Has merited from Romans to incur
Such base forgetfulness? Perhaps the love
With which he priz'd his country's good before
His children and himself? His great, his just,
His uncorrupted heart? Perhaps, in rank,
Of high estate, his noble poverty?
And is there one who breathes this common air
Can Regulus forget? What part of Rome
Speaks not of him? The public ways? Through
these

He pass'd in triumph once. The forum? There
He

He gave us wholesome laws. The walls where now
The senate meet ? His counsels there full oft
Have plann'd the public safety. Enter now
The temples, Manlius ; mount the capitol ;
And say who deck'd them with such foreign trophies ;

Sicilian, Punic, Tarentinian spoils.

These very lictors, that precede thee now,
That consul's purple robe, these, these were once
Beheld with Regulus—And now he's left
To die in bonds, and nothing more remains
To speak his virtues but Attilia's tears
Here shed, and shed in vain.—Alas ! my father,
Ungrateful citizens ! ungrateful Rome !

Man. Just is thy grief, Attilia, but unjust
Thy accusation ; since with us the fate
Of Regulus excites indeed compassion :
We know what impious treatment he receives
From cruel Carthage——

Att. 'Tis not Carthage merits
The name of cruel : Carthage but oppresses
An ancient enemy, while Rome forgets
A faithful citizen. The first remembers
Her injuries from him, the last has cancell'd
His labours for her sake : the one revenges
In him her shame, the other persecutes
The man who twin'd the laurel round her brows.
Then which of these is cruel, Rome or Carthage ?

Man.

Man. What can we then to avail him?

Att. Let the Senate
Now proffer to the ambaffador from Afric
For him exchange or ranfom,

Man. As a daughter
Thou fpeak'ft, Attilia; but with me it fits
To act as Conful. We muft firft debate
If fuch propofal glorious be to Rome.
He who has long inur'd his hands to chains—

Att. Whence haft thou, Manlius, learn'd thefe
rigid maxims?

Man. From great examples ever prefent to me.

Att. Say rather, Manlius, thou haft to my father
Been ever oppofite,

Man. Am I to blame
If he fubmitted to a fham'd defeat;
If he remain'd a prifoner midft the foes?

Att. Ere his defeat he gave full many a proof—

Man. The Senate now, Attilia, are affembled,
I can no longer ftay. Inspire the reft
With maxims lefs fevere: thy voice perhaps
May foften them and make my rigour vain;
Manlius is conful, not a king in Rome,

By thee my heart is cruel deem'd,
And fway'd by favage laws;
But grief is not a judge esteem'd
Impartial in her caufe,

I know

I know a daughter's anxious love ;
Yet no reproach to me,
If what so many may approve,
Is grief alone to thee ?

[*Exit.*

S C E N E III.

ATTILIA alone.

Then nothing more remains for me to hope
From either Consul : one is absent hence,
And one a foe. Then let us call in aid
The suffrage of the people—Hapless father !
On what uncertain turns must now depend
Thy liberty and life ?

S C E N E IV.

Enter BARCE hastily.

Bar. My dear Attilia !

Attilia.

Att. Why this haste ?

Bar. The ambassador.
From Afric is arriv'd.

Att. Such transport fure
These tidings merit not.

Bar. Others I bring
Of far more weight.

Att.

Att. Speak, Barce, what are those ?

Bar. With him is Regulus.

Att. My father !

Bar. He :

Thy father.

Att. Barce, O ! thou art deceiv'd,
Or thou deceiv'st Attilia.

Bar. I myself
Beheld him not—but every one—

Att. My Publius !
[*looking out sees her brother.*]

S C E N E V.

Enter PUBLIUS.

Pub. I'm wild with transport ! Regulus, my
sister,
Is now in Rome.

Att. O ! Gods, what joyful found !
Conduct me to him—where, where is he, Publius ?
O ! let us haste.

Pub. It is not yet the time :
He, with the ambaffador from Carthage, waits
Admittance from the Senate.

Att. Where, my brother,
Where didst thou fee him ?

Pub. Well thou know'st, as Quæstor,

My

My office is to welcome every envoy
From foreign states. I heard the ambassâdor
Of Carthage was arriv'd, and towards the gate
Advanc'd to meet him : when I thought to view
A face unknown from Afric, I beheld,
With rapture I beheld, my lord, my father.

Att. What said he, and to him what said my
Publius ?

Pub. Ere my arrival had he gain'd the shore ;
And silent on the Capitol, that part
In prospect rose, he thoughtful fix'd his eyes.
I saw, I knew him, cried, " My dearest father !"
And swiftly ran to kiss his honour'd hand.
He heard, he turn'd, then backward drew his step,
And with that look of awful majesty,
With which he once made conquer'd Afric tremble,
" In Rome" he said, " no captive is a father."
I would have answer'd, but abrupt he ask'd
If yet the Senate met, and where their meeting,
This heard, he to the temple bent his pace,—
Nor further spoke. I flew to tell the Consul,
Where shall I find him ? I behold not here
The attending Licitors.

Bar. To Bellona's temple
He went but now.

Att. Is Regulus return'd
To us a captive ?

Pub. Yes, but well I know

He

He brings the terms of peace, and that on him
Depends his destiny.

Att. Who knows from Rome
If these will find acceptance ?

Pub. Had'st thou seen
How Rome receiv'd him, never would thy breast
Have harbour'd doubts like these.—All, all,
Attilia,

Are wild with joy : too narrow were the ways
To admit the swarming throngs ; each points to
him

With eager gaze : by what endearing titles
I heard him nam'd ! and O ! what numbers
view'd him,

With eyes that moisten'd shone with tender tears !
What fight, Attilia, for a son like me.

Att. Where, where is now Licinius ? Seek
him, Publius,
Not shar'd with him, imperfect is my joy.

If I rejoice, let him rejoice,
The dearest object of my choice :
As when, alas ! I woes sustain,
His bosom shares with mine the pain.

For ever happy may he prove
The ties that bind his soul to love :
Enough till now his faithful mind
Has felt the pangs that lovers find. [Exit.

SCENE

S C E N E VI.

PUBLIUS, BARCE.

Pub. Farewell, my lovely Barce.*Bar.* Hear me yet ;
And know'st thou not the name of him, who comes
Ambassador from Carthage ?*Pub.* Yes ; he's call'd
Amilcar.*Bar.* Is he Hanno's son ?*Pub.* The same.*Bar.* [*aside.*] It is, it is my love.*Pub.* Thy colour changes—
What can this mean ? Perhaps from him proceeds
Thy coldness shewn to Publius.*Bar.* Sir, from you
And from Attilia, have I prov'd such goodness,
As never yet to feel a captive's chains :
And O ! 'twere most ungrateful to deceive you.
Permit me to disclose my inmost heart :
Know then——*Pub.* Be silent : I too well foresee
Thy candour will be fatal : 'midst the draught
Of this day's joy, ah ! mix not deadly poison.
If thou art vow'd another's ; let me still
Remain at least uncertain of my fate.

If

If now some happier object dwell
In Barce's gentle mind,
Let not thy lips, my fair-one, tell
The truth I dread to find.

Though dire suspicion, rankling still,
Can damp the purest joy,
Yet certainty of greater ill
Must every hope destroy.

[Exit.

S C E N E VII.

BARCE alone.

Is it then true that I so soon shall see
The man I love ? The first, the only object
For which I knew affection ?—O ! my heart !
How wilt thou feel before Amilcar's presence,
When now thou tremblest but to hear his name ?

She only knows, who long has mourn'd,
When truly to rejoice ;
Who sees again from far return'd
The object of her choice,

From flowing tears and heaving sighs,
That hours of grief employ,
Remembrance then the thought supplies
That turns to present joy.

[Exit.

SCENE

S C E N E VIII.

Inside of the temple of Bellona, seats for the Roman Senators and for the Ambassadors of foreign States. Licitors guarding the several entrances to the temple; a view of the Capitol and the Tiber.

MANLIUS, PUBLIUS, Senators.

Man. Let Regulus appear and with him bring
The ambassador from Afric :—Do the foes
Then ask for peace ? [to Publius.

Pub. At least they ask to make
Exchange of prisoners ; and to Regulus
Have given in charge to obtain it from the Senate.
If nothing he obtain, his faith is plighted
For his return to Carthage, with his blood
To answer Rome's refusal. This he swore,
And, ere he parted, saw the preparation
(A dreadful object !) for his threatened death.
Ah ! let it ne'er be said that to endure
Such punishment, a citizen like this——

Man. No more—he comes, [the Consul,
Publius and all the Senators take their
places : a place remains vacant next the
Consul, formerly occupied by Regulus. Re-
gulus and Amilcar pass between the Lic-
itors, who open their ranks to receive them,
and close again after they are passed.
Regulus on entering the Temple, stops
for a short time in a thoughtful attitude.

SCENE

S C E N E IX.

MANLIUS, PUBLIUS, Senators, REGULUS,
AMILCAR.

Amil. [*aside to Reg.*] Why, Regulus, this
pause?

Say, is this place to thee so new an object?

Reg. [*to Amil.*] I think what hence I went, and
what return.

Amil. [*addressing the Consul.*] The Senators of
Carthage, who desire
To sheathe the slaughtering sword have sent by me
Their greeting to the Senators of Rome :
If Rome desire a peace, they send it now.

Man. Sit then and speak their purpose.

[*Amil. sits.*]

[*to Reg.*] Regulus,
Approach, and re-assume thine ancient feat.

Reg. First tell me, who are these?

Man. The conscript Fathers.

Reg. And who art thou?

Man. Dost thou so little know
The Consul Manlius?

Reg. Tell me : with the Consul
And reverend Fathers shall a slave have place?

Man. No ! but for thee the rigour of her laws
2 Rome

Rome now forgets ; for thee, to whom she owes
Such numerous triumphs.

Reg. But if Rome forget,
I bear them here engrav'd.

Man. [*aside.*] Whoe'er beheld
Such rigid virtue ?

Pub. Nor can Publius now
Be seated longer here. [*rises.*]

Reg. What dost thou, Publius ?

Pub. I but fulfill my duty : if the father
Refuse a seat, it fits the son to rise.

Reg. Are then the manners now so chang'd in
Rome ?

Before I sail'd for Afric, 'twas a crime,
In public cares, to think of private duties.

Pub. But yet—

Reg. Sit, Publius, fit, and learn henceforth
To fill thy place more nobly.

Pub. Such respect
Sure nature justly claims before a father.

Reg. When he was vanquish'd, then thy father
died.

Man. Now let Amilcar speak. [*Publius sits.*]

Amil. To Regulus
Has Carthage given in trust to make to Rome
Her wishes known : what he shall speak, is spoken
By me and Carthage.

Man.

Man. Regulus then speak.

Amil. [*aside to Reg.*] Remember now if nothing^t thou obtain

Thou then hast sworn——

Reg. [*to him.*] What Regulus has sworn
He shall fulfill.

Man. [*aside.*] His life is now at stake.
What words will he employ ?

Pub. [*aside.*] Ye Gods of Rome !
Do you inspire his lips with eloquence.

Reg. The Carthaginian foe, on this condition,
That all he holds be now confirm'd his own,
Of you, O ! conscript Fathers, asks a peace,
If peace be will'd not, he at least demands
A full exchange, on either side, to end
The mournful exile of your mutual captives :
My counsel is on these—reject them both,

Amil. [*aside.*] What do I hear ?

Pub. [*aside.*] Alas !

Man. [*aside.*] I'm mute with wonder.

Reg. I shall not labour here to explain the evils
Attendant upon peace ; but if the foe
So much desire to treat, it argues fear.

Man. But then th' exchange ?

Reg. Th' exchange conceals designs
To you more dangerous——

Amil. [*aside to Reg.*] Regulus, remember.

Reg.

Reg. [*to him.*] What Regulus has sworn he shall fulfill.

Pub. [*aside.*] O ! Heavens ! my father's lost.

Reg. Th' exchange propos'd
Includes a thousand mischiefs ; but th' example
Is more pernicious. Farewell, Fathers, then
To Rome's high honours, valour, constancy,
And military virtue, if the coward
May hope to escape with liberty and life.
What profits Rome that HE to Rome returns
Who bears upon his back the marks of shame,
The servile scourge ? Who living left his arms
Unstain'd with hostile blood, and basely chose,
Through fear of death, to meet the victor's scorn ?
O ! shame, eternal shame !

Man. Whate'er th' exchange
May prove, the good of Regulus alone
Compensates every evil.

Reg. Manlius, no :
Thou art deceiv'd, for Regulus is mortal,
I feel already the decays of age,
And little now can I avail to Rome ;
But much those vigorous youths, for me ex-
chang'd,
Will strengthen Carthage : be not then so blinded
Against yourselves. I to my country gave
My best of days, and to the foe I give
The useless remnant : let him poorly triumph
To see an old man die ; but let him see

His triumph vain, when here in every part,
A Regulus shall rise to bleed for Rome.

Man. [*aside.*] Unheard-of fortitude !

Pub. [*aside.*] O ! fatal courage !

Amil. [*aside.*] What sentiments, till now to me
unknown !

Man. We must not merely weigh what serves
the state,
But weigh, with service done, the Roman honour;
And surely Rome can ne'er with honour prove
Ungrateful to a citizen like thee.

Reg. Would Rome be grateful to me, Regulus
Shall point the way to shew her gratitude.
These rude barbarians, Fathers, dar'd to think
My soul so base, that abject fear of death
Might send me here with purpose to betray you.
This thought alone exceeds the sharpest pangs
That tyrants can inflict—Revenge me, Fathers—
I was a Roman once—Arm, arm with speed,
And from their temples snatch the imprison'd
 eagles,
Nor sheathe your weapons, till this rival power
Be crush'd for ever ! Let me, when return'd,
Even in the face of my tormentors read
The dread of your repentment : gladly then
I perish ; in my latest hour, to see
How Afric trembles at the Roman name.

Amil. [*aside.*] My indignation now is lost in
wonder.

Pub.

Pub. [*aside.*] None answer, O ! ye Powers !

Man. So great a question
Demands maturest counsel. We must give
Some time to recollect our thoughts, oppress'd
With just astonishment. Thou soon, Amilcar,
Shalt know the Senate's will : but first the Fathers
Will to the temples go, with pious vows
To invoke the Gods. [*he rises, and all rise at
the same time.*]

Reg. And is there yet a doubt ?

Man. Yes, Regulus, I see not if the peril
Be greater to neglect such weighty counsel ;
Or greater peril, in pursuing that,
To lose the man from whom such counsel came.

Thou great despiser of thy death,
Canst for thy country yield thy breath ;
Thy country, doom'd such death to see,
Must mourn her noblest son in thee.

Thou calmly seek'st for her to die,
And serve her at a price too high ;
Since rarely Heaven on man below
Will virtue great as thine bestow.

[*Exit, followed by the Senators and Lictors.*]

S C E N E X.

REGULUS, PUBLIUS, AMILCAR.

Amil. Does Regulus thus keep his plighted faith ?

Reg. My word was plighted to return to Carthage ;

My word shall be fulfill'd.

Amil. But yet——

S C E N E XI.

Enter ATTILIA and LICINIUS.

Att. My father !

Lic. My lord !

Att. } On this most honour'd hand,
Lic. }

[attempting to kiss his hand,

Reg. Away.

The Gods be prais'd I have not yet my freedom.

Att. Is then the exchange refus'd ?

Reg. Conduct us, Publius,
To that abode, prescrib'd by Roman laws
For me and for Amilcar.

Pub. Wilt thou not

Revisit

Revisit now thy own paternal Lares,
Thine ancient seat ?

Reg. No hostile messenger
Must enter Rome.

Lic. This too severe decree
Is not for Regulus.

Reg. But such decree,
If not for all, were partial tyranny.

Att. At least permit, where'er thou goest, my
father,
Permit me to attend thee.

Reg. No, Attilia,
The present time demands far other thoughts
Than those a daughter and a father feel.

Att. Why art thou chang'd from what I knew
my father ?

Reg. My fate is chang'd, but Regulus the same.

With laurel wreath'd, or bound in chains,
I bear a soul resign'd :
The thralldom that my limbs restrains,
In freedom leaves my mind.

In various forms my virtue still,
Through every change of state,
Can combat, with unshaken will,
The rigorous turns of fate.

[*Exit, followed by Publius,
Licinius and people.*]

SCENE

S C E N E XII.

ATTILIA *in suspense*, AMILCAR *going*, BARCE
entering.

Bar. Amilcar.

Amil. Ah ! my Barce. [*returning.*] Thou again ?
Thou art lost to me, since Regulus dissuades
The Senate from th' exchange.

Bar. } O ! Heavenly Powers !
Att. }

Amil. Farewell, my love, I must attend on
Publius.

O ! I have much to tell thee.

Bar. Yet thou'rt silent.

Amil. If still thou lov'st, thy lover's mind
Thou canst not vainly seek ;
Thou in these eyes the thoughts wilt find
My tongue denies to speak :

Since I, who caught from thee the fires
That in my bosom glow,
Can from a sigh thy lip respire,
A thousand secrets know.

[*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E XIII.

ATTILIA, BARCE.

Att. Ah! who would thus have fear'd? My
father, Barce,
Conspires against himself.

Bar. But should the Senate
As yet determine not; for thee, Attilia,
There much remains to hope. Go hence, employ
Each power of speech, before the Fathers meet
To new debate. 'Tis now the time to adopt
Whatever art or eloquence can do:
The love of his associates, and the faith
Of bosom friends; Go:—every where implore
The suffrage of the Romans to thy aid,

Att. All shall be tried, but little is my hope.

But late I seem'd in port to lie,
With waters smooth and cloudless sky;
When fiercely now the tempest sweeps
And bears me helpless to the deeps.

To tremble now can scarce be shame:
I merit pity more than blame,
If midst a storm so cruel tost,
In black despair my hopes are lost.

[*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E XIV.

BARCE *alone.*

Alas ! what hapless destiny is mine,
If once again, without me, should Amilcar
Return to Carthage !—at the thought alone
I feel myself——no, rather let me hope—
The unhappy ever find a time to mourn :
From folly, not from wisdom, mortals seek
With cruel art to look for future woes.

The ideas fram'd of distant ill
Which timorous fancy drew,
We find, by sage experience, still
More painful than the true.

Who rashly figures in his mind
Some mischief to deplore,
Is certain then a pang to find
That doubtful was before.

[*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T II. S C E N E I.

Apartments within view of Rome, in a palace of the suburbs appointed for the residence of the Carthaginian ambassadors.

REGULUS, PUBLIUS.

Reg. How ! Publius here ? The glory now of Rome,
Thy father's honour and the public peace
Are in debate ; then say, what means my son
Thou art not in the senate ?

Pub. Pardon, sir,
As yet they're not assembled.

Reg. Go—delay not ;
Support my counsel firmly with the Fathers,
And prove thyself deserving of thy race.

Pub. How ! would you have me then employ
the means
To bring destruction on you ?

Reg. That to me
Is not destruction which can serve my country.

Pub. O ! yet, my lord, have pity on yourself.

Reg. And think'st thou, Publius, that my mind
is now
By frenzy urg'd ? Believ'st thou I alone,

Of

Of all mankind, am hateful to myself ?
O ! no—thou art deceiv'd : like each that lives,
I would secure the good and shun the evil.
But know the last I only find in guilt,
The first in virtue. Guilt it were to gain
My freedom with the sufferings of my country ;
Hence life and freedom are to me an evil.
'Tis virtue with our blood to serve our country ;
Hence servitude and death to me are good.

Pub. Our country still—

Reg. Our country is a whole
Of which we form the part. 'Tis criminal
In one that bears the name of citizen,
To weigh his private weal distinct from hers.
By him is nothing to be wish'd or shunn'd
But what may harm or benefit that country,
To which he owes his all. Whene'er he toils,
Or sheds his blood to serve her, from himself
He nothing gives, but only renders back
What he from her receiv'd. She gave him birth
And nourishment : she rear'd his infant years
To ripen'd manhood ; with her laws protects
From home-bred spoilers ; with her arms defends
From foreign insults : she on him bestows
Name, rank and honours : she rewards his merits,
And vindicates his wrongs : a tender mother,
She labours to procure him all the happiness
Which earth can yield. But blessings such as these

'Tis

'Tis true must have their claims, and who rejects
them

Must give up every title to the advantage
Of law and social compact : let him seek
The inhospitable woods, there feed contented
On scanty acorns in some fordid styè,
And at his will enjoy a life of freedom.

Pub. Your words, with reverence heard, con-
vince my reason,
But cannot touch my heart ; and nature shrinks
To do your bidding. I am still a son,
And never can forget it.

Reg. Weak excuse
For one a Roman born. There have been fathers—
Virginus, Manlius, Brutus——

Pub. O ! 'tis true——
But fortitude like theirs has found example
In fathers only : Rome has never yet
Produc'd a son to sacrifice his parent.

Reg. Then, Publius, thou aspire to stand the
first
And glorious pattern to succeeding sons.
—Away.

Pub. Yet hear——

Reg. No more. I wait from thee
The tidings of my fate.

Pub. You ask too much
From me, O ! fir, too much.

Reg. Say, would'st thou have me
A stranger or a father? If a stranger,
Neglect not then the good of Rome for mine;
And if a father, Publius, then respect
My will and leave me.

Pub. Could a father see
Th' emotions of my heart he then might claim
Less rigid duties.

Reg. From thy heart he claims
The proofs of constancy and not of love.

Pub. Ah! would'st thou prove me, father, say
What proof shall I bestow?
Before thy feet my life I lay,
For thee my blood shall flow.

But that a son should now appear
A parent's life to seek;
Forgive me, mighty sire, if here
I find my virtue weak.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E II.

REGULUS *alone.*

The important hour is nigh, and much I fear
The fathers yet may pause—O! hear me now,
Ye guardian Gods of Rome! Inspire their souls
With nobler thoughts.

SCENE

S C E N E III.

Enter MANLIUS.

Man. [*speaks as entering.*] The victors may remain

To guard the entrance, and let none presume
To come thus far.

Reg. [*aside, seeing Man.*] Manlius ! what means
he here ?

Man. Ah ! let me press thee to my eager bosom,
Exalted hero !

Reg. Think what thou would'st do ;
A consul sure——

Man. I am not, Regulus,
A consul now : I here am only one
That venerates thy fortitude and virtue,
And burns with emulation ; owns himself
By thee subdued, and here confessing all
His ancient enmity to thee unjust,
Now fues to knit with thine his hand in friendship.

Reg. Such is the wonted strain of noble minds.
The stormy wind upon the prostrate tree
Or blows no more, or lifts it from the ground.
'Tis to my happy slavery I owe
A friend so gain'd in thee.

Man. 'Tis true, thy fortune

Has shewn me what thou art ; and ne'er these eyes
Beheld thee so majestic as in chains.

Oft have I seen thee from the foes of Rome
Return a victor : now thou art return'd
A greater victor o'er thyself and Fortune.
Thy laurels rais'd my envy, but thy chains
Excite respect. I own that Regulus
Then seem'd a hero, now he seems a God.

Reg. Enough, enough, O ! Manlius, praise be-
flow'd

By such a lip might shake the firmest virtue :
Believe me grateful then, that Manlius deigns
To honour with his love my last of days.

Man. Thy last of days ! I mean to save thee still
Long, long to bless thy country ; and have la-
bour'd

For thee my utmost, that th' exchange propos'd
May meet the general suffrage.

Reg. [*disturbed.*] Is it thus
That Manlius has begun to prove his friendship ?
What could'st thou more had still thy hate pursued
me ?

O ! thou wilt rob me thus of all the fruit
I hop'd from shame. I am not here in Rome
To shew my chains and to excite her pity :
I come to save her from a fatal risk ;
The risk of listening to insidious terms.
If thou canst give no other pledge of love,

Return

Return again to hate me.

Man. But th' exchange .
Rejected seals thy death.

Reg. Is then the name
Of death so dreadful in the ears of Manlius ?
I need not now be told that I am mortal :
The foe can only take from Regulus
What nature soon will claim ; and that which now
Would be a willing gift must then become
A certain tribute : let me teach the world
That Regulus has liv'd but for his country ;
And when his life has reach'd its fated close,
At least can make his death of use to Rome.

Man. O glorious sentiments ! O ! happy foil
Producing such a son ! Ah ! who could e'er
With-hold from thee his love ?

Reg. If thou will love me,
Then love me as a Roman : these alone
Our terms of friendship : let us offer each
To Rome his ready victim ; I my life,
And thou thy friend ; since 'tis but just thy virtue
Should make some offering to thy country's good.
Go then—but promise to support my counsel
Amidst the Senate. On this sole condition
I here accept the friendship Manlius gives.
Say then——

Man. [after a pause.] It shall be so—I plight
my faith.

Reg.

Reg. In Manlius for my friend I here embrace
A gift from favouring Heaven.

Man. Why am not I
Thus honour'd with the weight of chains like
thine ?

Reg. Let us not lose the time. The conscript
Fathers
Perhaps are met. Remember, to thy truth
I trust my country's fame, my peace and honour.

Man. Farewell, our Tiber's glory !

Reg. Friend, farewell. [*they embrace,*

Man. What flame of glory now I feel
While thus thy voice with virtuous zeal
The patriot's godlike name maintains !
The wretch, howe'er debas'd with fear,
Inspir'd anew such words to hear,
Would give a kingdom for thy chains.
[*Exit,*

S C E N E IV,

Enter LICINIUS.

Reg. [*to himself.*] I now begin to breathe ; propi-
tious Heaven
Sure seconds my designs,

Lic. [*to Reg.*] At length I come

To

To address thee once again with better omens

Reg. And whence thy joy, Licinius?

Lic. In my heart

The happiest hopes revive. For thee till now
I've every means essay'd.

Reg. For me, Licinius?

Lic. For thee; and dost thou, at a time like this,
Believe thy goodness lost to my remembrance?
O! no—'tis ever present: thou to me
Wert patron, general, father. First by thee
My feet were guided through the paths of honour:
Thou gav'st me, fir——

Reg. [*impatiently.*] But say, in my behalf
What hast thou done?

Lic. Thy life and liberty
I have defended.

Reg. [*disturbed.*] Say'st thou?

Lic. At the entrance
I waited near the temple, where the Senate
Are now assembled. Singly, as they pass'd,
I urg'd the Fathers, and inspir'd in each
The wish to serve thee.

Reg. [*aside.*] Gods! what do I hear?
[*to Lic.*] And hast thou then—

Lic. Not I alone have labour'd;
Let me not take the praise another claims:
'Tis true I've pleaded for thee—but Attilia

Has far out-gone Licinius.

Reg. Who?

Lic. Attilia.

In Rome no daughter better loves a father.
O! how she spoke; what eloquence display'd
To wake the tenderest feelings! How she blended
Her grief with modesty! and how employ'd,
In every form, reproaches, prayers and praise!

Reg. What said the Fathers?

Lic. When Attilia sued,
Who could resist?—Behold, she comes: observe
What kindling joy in every feature smiles.

S C E N E V.

Enter ATTILIA.

Att. At length, my dearest father—

Reg. [*severely.*] Hast thou dar'd
Again to see me? Ah! I little thought,
Till now, to find thee leagu'd amongst my foes.

Att. Who I thy foe, my father!

Reg. Are not they
My foes who rashly shall oppose my counsels?

Att. Alas! is then my pious wish to save thee
A proof of enmity?

Reg. And know'st thou then
What saves me, or destroys? Who call'd on thee
To

To take a share in business of the state ?
Who made thee guardian of my destiny ?
And whence——

Lic. O ! fir, too far——

Reg. And speaks Licinius ?
His silence best would plead in his defence,
As that might seem repentance—Mighty Gods !
A daughter, and a Roman !—

Att. As a daughter
I deem'd, my lord——

Lic. And as a Roman, I
Believ'd that thus to avert thy cruel fate——

Reg. Be silent—I no Roman deem
The dastard advocate for shame ;
Be silent : mine I ne'er esteem
A child who stains the Roman name.

'Tis now from you alone I find
An anxious thought in galling chains ;
'Tis now by you alone my mind,
Amidst my freedom lost, complains. [*Exit.*

S C E N E VI.

ATTILIA, LICINIUS.

Att. Tell me, Licinius, dost thou think a maid
Was ever born more wretched than Attilia ?

To love like me a father ; to pursue
All means to save him ; for his sake to feel
A heart transfix'd with anguish : these were virtue
In others, but in me are deem'd a crime.

Lic. Take comfort, my Attilia, nor repent
Thy pious work. One duty calls on us,
On Regulus another : if to him
Contempt of life is glory, 'twould in us
Be impious not to save him : thou shalt see
He will be grateful : let not then his anger
Distress thy gentle soul. The sick man oft
The sage physician blames, and cruel calls
The friendly hand that ministers his cure.

Att. His keen reproaches pierce me to the heart;
My courage shrinks before them.

Lic. Tell me then
Would you, for these, consent to lose a father ?

Att. O ! no, still let him chide, but let him live.

Lic. Believe me, he shall live—Ah ! cease to
weep,
And be those lovely eyes again serene :
To see thee mourn dissolves my firmest temper.

On you, ye gentle stars of love,
Depends a lover's fate :
Too well your ruling power I prove ;
At will you every passion move,
And every change create.

When you with pleasure kindle bright
My kindling spirits rise ;
But when a cloud obscures your light,
With you my courage dies. [Exit.

S C E N E VII.

ATTILIA *alone.*

Alas ! 'tis all too true : no bounds are set
To Fortune's frowns or smiles : with lavish hand
Her gifts she scatters ; and she heaps affliction
Beyond a mortal's sufferance. I, alas !
Am now the hapless object of her anger.
I see the skies around me veil'd in clouds,
And who can tell what tempests they conceal ?

If other bolts you now prepare,
Ye adverse powers, my breast I bare ;
On me your judgment I invoke,
But save my father from the stroke.

Respect, in that unshaken mind,
An image of your heavenly kind ;
And leave to us a pattern here
Of one who knows not guilt or fear. [Exit,

SCENE

S C E N E VIII.

*A gallery in the same palace.*REGULUS *alone.*

Why dost thou throb, my heart, and whence
th' emotions
Till now to thee unknown? Thou hast defied
The rage of seas, the dangers of the field,
With all the monsters bred on Afric's soil;
And now thou tremblest in the bare expectance
Of what thy fate determines. Thou indeed
Hast cause for fear: till now was ne'er thy glory
Expos'd to peril thus. Yet say, ye Powers,
What is this glory? But a tyrant-passion,
Which, like each rebel passion of the soul,
Our reason must subdue? O! no—such language
Befits the dastard: he in vain was born
Who lives but for himself: 'tis glory teaches
To hold another's good beyond our own.
Whate'er on earth is priz'd to this we owe:
This lifts our nature from the servile state
Where men would rust without the sense of honour:
This blunts the sting of pain; from danger takes
The sense of fear; strips death of every terror;
Enlarges kingdoms; gives to cities safety;
Can savage customs change to gentle manners,
And teach mankind to imitate the Gods.
By this—Ha! Publius comes—he seems to tread

With timid steps—What bring'st thou? Has the
senate
As yet decided? What is now my fate?

S C E N E IX.

Enter PUBLIUS.

Pub. O! fir—what tidings for a son to utter!
[*aside.*]

Reg. Why art thou silent?

Pub. Would to Heaven my tongue
Were dumb for ever!

Reg. Tell me——

Pub. Every offer
The Senate have rejected.

Reg. Then at length
The happy Roman genius has prevail'd,
Thanks to the Gods! I have not liv'd in vain.
Go—seek Amilcar: nothing more is wanting;
The work is now complete. We must depart.

Pub. Unhappy father!

Reg. Call'st thou him unhappy,
Who at his latest hour can serve his country?

Pub. I love my country: I lament thy bondage.

Reg. Each has his bonds, since life is servitude;
He that laments, let him lament the fate
Of every one that's born, not, Publius, mine.

Pub.

Pub. The rage of these barbarians, O! my father,
Will sacrifice thy life.

Reg. And end my slavery.
Farewell—but let me now depart alone.

Pub. And can you then refuse from me, my father,
The last sad offices of filial love?

Reg. For thee I've other duties. Whilst I hasten
For my departure, thou remain to keep
Disconsolate Attilia from my sight.
Her grief would damp my triumph: ever duteous
To me has been her love: should now her sorrows
Exceed the bounds, bear, Publius, with her weakness.

We must not from her nature hope to find
A manly fortitude: do thou advise her:
Let thy example teach her that submission
The great occasion claims: direct, console her:
Fulfil to her the office of a father.
To thee I trust a daughter, and to thee
I trust thyself, my Publius! Let me hope—
But O! I see that nature struggles in thee—
I deem'd thy soul more constant—Have my thoughts
Been then deceiv'd?—No, Publius, thou art still
The son of Regulus, the son of Rome.

Be

Be ne'er those pleasing hopes deceiv'd,
Which from thy early years I drew :
The deeds by patriot souls achiev'd
With emulation now pursue.

O ! let me leave in thee an heir
That well his father's love may claim ;
Nor ever give this cheek to wear,
(Remembering thee) the blush of shame.
[*Exit.*

S C E N E X.

PUBLIUS *alone.*

Take courage, Publius. Though thy task be
dreadful
Thou must subdue thyself : thy blood demands it ;
The blood of Regulus : his great example
Before thy eyes now loudly calls upon thee.
Thy heart, that yielded first to nature's impulse,
Must act more firmly : imitate a father,
And make amends for all thy former weakness.

S C E N E XI.

Enter ATTILIA *and* BARCE.

Att. Is it then true, my brother—

Bar. Publius, speak.

Pub.

Pub. It is most true : the Senate have decided,
And Regulus departs.

Att. O Heaven !

Bar. What say'st thou ?

Att. Have all alike betray'd me ?

Bar. Is there then——

Pub. Now nought avails.

Bar. Have pity—O ! Amilcar ! [*sees Amil.*

S C E N E XII.

Enter AMILCAR and LICINIUS.

Amil. [*to Bar.*] There is no longer hope.

Lic. [*to Att.*] All, all is lost !

Att. Where, where is Regulus ? With him at
least

Attilia will depart.

Pub. Forbear : this grief
Will but offend thy father.

Att. Hope not, Publius,
To keep me longer here.

Pub. I hope, Attilia,
At length will yield to reason, and remember
To her 'tis not permitted——

Att. I remember

This,

This, this alone—Attilia is a daughter—
—Leave me.

Pub. I must not leave thee.

Att. But my father
Meantime departs.

Pub. Fear not he will depart
While here Amilcar stays.

Att. Alas ! who now
Will give me aid or counsel ? Speak, Amilcar.

Amil. Between contending passions I am lost.

Att. What says Licinius ?

Lic. From the sudden stroke
I scarce can breathe.

Att. O ! Publius.

Pub. O ! my sister,
Exert thy firmer constancy. Our father
Should teach us how to suffer adverse fortune :
Those only merit to be call'd his children
Who emulate his virtues.

Att. Speak'st thou thus ?
Thou, that with mine should'st blend a brother's
 sorrows ;
Thou that should'st mix thy sighs and tears with
 mine.

What means my Publius ?

Amil. Well I know the meaning.
His love is fix'd on Barce ; she departs

If

If Regulus remain : behold the cause
That gives this boasted fortitude to Publius.

Pub. [*aside.*] Ye Gods ! shall Publius hear and
hear unmov'd
That tongue's calumnious falsehood ?

Amil. Every power
Of art and speech he doubtless has employ'd
To make the Senate spurn th' exchange propos'd.

Pub. A thought like this, Amilcar, well befits
A barbarous son of Carthage.

Amil. Yet——

Pub. No more—
Now hear me speak : thou know'st the fate of Barce
Is in my hands.

Amil. I know it. As a gift
Thy mother had obtain'd her from the Senate :
She dying since, the maid beheld in thee
Her future lord.

Pub. Now mark how Publius uses
The power that fortune gives him. More than life
I love the charming Barce ; but I love
My honour more. I know with souls like thine
Has virtue rarely credit : let me then
In fordid minds expunge the least pretence
For such suspicions. Barce, thou art free,
Go with Amilcar, and return to Carthage.

Bar. Ye Powers ! can this be true ?

Amil. Such wondrous virtue——

Pub.

Pub. Learn hence, Amilcar, how a Roman loves.

[*Exit.*]

S C E N E XIII.

LICINIUS, ATTILIA, BARCE, AMILCAR.

Att. [*to Lic.*] Behold the inhuman, how he
leaves Attilia. [*he not hearing her.*]

Bar. [*to Amil.*] Heard'st thou not Publius ?
[*he not hearing her.*]

Att. [*to Lic.*] Yet thou answerest not ?

Bar. [*to Amil.*] Dost thou not hear, my love ?

Amil. Barce, farewell. [*firmly.*]

Await for my return. [*going.*]

Lic. Farewell, Attilia. [*going.*]

Att. }
Bar. } Ah ! whither, whither goest thou ?

Lic. [*to Att.*] To preserve
For thee a father.

Amil. [*to Bar.*] Regulus to save.

Att. [*to Lic.*] Alas ! what can'st thou do ?

Bar. [*to Amil.*] What means Amilcar ?

Lic. [*to Att.*] A desperate evil claims a desperate cure.

Amil. [*to Bar.*] The Roman pride may rivals
find in virtue.

Att. [*to Lic.*] Ah ! take me too.

Bar.

Bar. [*to Amil.*] Let me attend on thee.

Lic. [*to Att.*] O! no—I then should tremble
for thy safety.

Amil. [*to Bar.*] No! thou must here remain.

Bar. [*to Amil.*] And wilt thou not
Reveal thy purpose?

Att. [*to Lic.*] Wilt thou not at least
Give me to know——

Lic. [*to Att.*] Ere long thou shalt know all.

Amil. [*to Bar.*] Confide in me.

Lic. In Rome shall Regulus
Be still detain'd or see Licinius perish. [*Exit.*

Amil. Yes, Africa, like Rome, shall boast her
heroes. [*going he returns.*

If less our pride, not less our mind
Can virtue breed; nor less we find
By us is known the path to fame.
Though from the capitol afar,
Our worthies may with Rome's compare;
And Gods extend their guardian care,
To those who boast no Roman name.
[*Exit.*

S C E N E XIV.

ATTILIA, BARCE.

Att. O! Barce!

Bar. O! Attilia!

Att. Speak, my Barce.

Bar.

Bar. What can we hope ?

Att. Alas ! I know not what.

Doubtleſs Licinius, with the people means
To raiſe a tumult : this may fatal prove
To him and to his country, yet ſupply
No aid to ſave my father.

Bar. Struck with wonder
At Publius' generous act, but deeply ſtung
With his reproach, Amilcar goes to prove
His ſoul as noble. What may he attempt,
And to what dangers may he ſtand expoſ'd !

Att. O ! mighty Gods ! aſſiſt my dear Licinius !

Bar. And O ! ye Powers, preſerve my plighted
ſpouſe.

Att. I ſhake with terror.

Bar. Let us not, Attilia,
Be abject in our fears : the heavens now ſhew
A brighter aſpect, and a ray of hope
Gleams o'er the proſpect.

Att. True my deareſt Barce,
And yet I cannot raiſe my drooping heart.

My hope is not the gentle beam
Diffus'd from ſkies ſerene,
But 'tis a ſhort and languid gleam
From troubled meteors ſeen.

A gleam,

A gleam, we see by fits appear,
That shines but to distress,
That shews, alas ! the danger near,
But never makes it less.

[Exit.

S C E N E XV.

BARCE alone.

I seek to calm distress'd Attilia's bosom,
Would heal her fears and tremble with my own.
My heart was firmer when my hopes were less :
Uncertain fear then only made me suffer
For future ills ; but now, alas ! I dread
To lose a bliss, I deem'd securely mine.

Whoe'er his dangerous path pursues
Through stormy seas, must risk to lose
His life on faithless billows tost.
But luckless he, who scapes in vain
The dangers of the distant main,
To find a shipwreck near the coast.

[Exit.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III. S C E N E I.

A hall with a prospect of the gardens.

REGULUS, African Guards.

Reg. Why this delay? And knows not yet
Amilcar

The Senate's purpose? Whither is he gone?
He must be found. Time warns us to depart.
Since nothing more remains for him to hope
Or me to wish, our longer tarriance here
Is criminal in both—Ah! come, my friend,
Come to my breast. [*seeing Manlius.*]

S C E N E II.

Enter MANLIUS.

Without thy aid, my fame
Had been in danger: 'tis by thee I still
Preserve my chains: thou hast secur'd the fruit
Of all my servitude.

Man. 'Tis true, but yet
Thou wilt depart: 'tis true, but we must lose thee.

Reg. You lose me, Manlius, if I still remain.

Man. Ah! why did I begin so late to love thee?

VOL. III.

U

Yet,

Yet, Regulus, thou now receiv'st from Manlius
Too fatal proofs of friendship.

Reg. Greater proofs
I ne'er could hope from him, whose heart sincere
Names me his friend; but if the noble Manlius
Would give me others, I shall task his friendship.

Man. O! name them.

Reg. Every duty thus fulfill'd
The citizen demands; at length, remembrance
Tells me I am a father. Well thou know'st
I leave behind two children here in Rome:
These, Publius and Attilia, next my country
Are the dear objects of my heart's affection.
By nature virtuous both, but both appear
Two plants yet immature, that still require
The cultor's watchful care. To effect this work
Has Heaven to me denied. Take, Manlius, then
The pious charge: do thou with usury
Supply my loss, and to thy noble heart
And prudent counsels let the father owe
His glory, and the children every aid
That youth derives from more experienc'd age.

Man. I pledge my truth: with jealous care I'll
guard,
Thy dear remains; and both shall find in me
If not as noble, yet as kind a father.
I'll point them out the paths of Roman virtue,
Nor arduous this will prove: suffice for souls
By nature warm'd with every generous passion

To

To hear the story of paternal deeds.

Reg. Then there's no more to wish.

S C E N E III.

Enter PUBLIUS in haste.

Pub. Manlius ! my father !

Reg. What has befallen ?

Pub. All Rome is now in tumult ;
The people rave, and with a general voice
Forbid you to depart. [to *Reg.*

Reg. And can it be
That Rome will e'er consent to such exchange,
Injurious to her fame ?

Pub. No !—Rome rejects
Th' exchange and peace ; but wills you to remain.

Reg. Who ? I remain ? and where is then my
promise ?
My solemn faith ?

Pub. Each one declares no faith
Is due to those, who ne'er by faith were bound.

Reg. Shall then one crime suffice to veil another ?
And who will e'er be guilty, if example
Exculpates an offender ?

Pub. Now the assembly

Of Augurs meet : the important question there
Will be decided.

Reg. Think not I have need
Of oracles like these. Suffice for me
My word is plighted—I shall hence depart.
Rome may debate on peace, or on th' exchange ;
It rests with me to judge of my return ;
The first concerns the public weal, the last
Respects myself alone : I am not now
The thing I was at Rome ; and none can claim
A right to those who wear another's chains.

Pub. At least hear what our Augurs may
decree.

Reg. No, Publius, if I wait for their decision
I give my sanction to it. Guards lead on,
[to the guards.

Conduct me to the port—my friend, farewell.

[to *Man.* going.

Man. No, Regulus, forbear. Should'st thou
encounter

The furious populace, by open force
Thou may'st be here detain'd, and make, thyself,
All Rome thus guilty of a breach of faith.

Reg. Shall I then fail ?

Man. O ! no—thou shalt depart.
But let me first go hence to appease this tumult.
The Consular authority shall check
Such ill tim'd rashness.

Reg.

Reg. Manlius, on thy faith,
I shall remain—but if——

Man. I understand thee :
Enough ; thy glory now is all my own,
And well I know thy heart——on mine rely.

On me rely, remember still
I boast by birth a Roman name ;
Like thee, within my breast I feel
The kindled warmth of glory's flame.

'Tis true that fate to me denies,
Like thee such honour'd chains to bear ;
But though in vain such chains I prize,
At least I merit such to wear, [Exit.

S C E N E IV.

REGULUS, PUBLIUS.

Reg. And is it then so hard a task in Rome,
Such labour to preserve our faith unshaken ?
Is then—Ah ! Publius, still thou linger'st here,
So little mov'd ? And leav'st a friend alone
To reap the fame of joining toils with mine ?
Go hence with him, make my departure sure :
Fain would I stand indebted to a son
For what secures my glory.

Pub. Dearest father,
I shall obey ; but yet——

Reg.

Reg. Why sighs my son ?
That sigh bespeaks a mind oppress'd with anguish

Pub. Yes, I must own my suffering heart
The cruel conflict scarce survives :
But greater surely my desert
To act, though griev'd, the Roman part,
While duty with affection strives.

What sacrifice had I to to make ?
What praises, father, claim from you,
If passions, nature must awake,
Which now I quell for glory's sake,
Were not so painful to subdue ? [Exit.

S C E N E V.

Enter AMILCAR.

Amil. Then, Regulus, at length——

Reg. Without thy speaking
I understand, Amilcar, thy reproaches.
Heed not this tumult : Regulus alive
Will not remain in Rome.

Amil. I know not yet
What tumult thou wouldst mean. I am not here
On thee to vent reproaches : I am come
For thy support. Think not on Tiber's banks
Are heroes only born ; since we no less
Can boast, amongst us, souls to cope with theirs.

Reg.

Reg. It may be so : but 'tis not now a time
For vain contention. Summon all thy train
And see that each be ready to depart.

Amil. First hear and answer me.

Reg. [*aside.*] I'll tunc'd delay.

Amil. Is gratitude our glory ?

Reg. Gratitude
Is sure a duty : but this duty now
So little meets regard, that to fulfill it
May well be titled glory.

Amil. What if danger
Attend the grateful ?

Reg. It may then be call'd
A god-like virtue

Amil. Then from me thou canst not
With-hold this virtue : hear me now. Thy son,
Touch'd for himself with sense of jealous honour,
Refigns to me my Barce ; yet his soul
Adores the lovely maid : from him I caught
The generous flame, and now am come to save
For him a father, and expose myself
To all the rage of Carthage.

Reg. Wouldst thou save me ?

Amil. I would.

Reg. And how ?

Amil. By leaving thee the means
To escape at will. With art I shall remove

These

These guards to distance... Cautious thou conceal
Thyself in Rome, till, with dissembled anger,
As if compell'd without thee to depart,
I loose my anchors from the port.

Reg. [*aside.*] Barbarian.

Amil. What sayst thou? Speak. Art thou not
struck with wonder
At such propofal?

Reg. Doubtless.

Amil. Couldst thou e'er
Have hop'd from me this offer?

Reg. No, Amilcar.

Amil. And yet my fate is not to be a Roman.

Reg. Full well indeed I see it.

Amil. [*to the guards.*] Leave us, guards.

Reg. [*to them.*] Not one depart.

Amil. And wherefore?

Reg. Think me grateful
For all thy kindness; but with thee I mean
Again to visit Carthage.

Amil. Dost thou then
Despise my mercy?

Reg. No: I pity thee,
Thou know'st not what is virtue: thou hast now,
With specious shew of zeal and seeming mercy,
Degraded me, thy country and thyself.

Amil. I, Regulus?

Reg.

Reg. Yes, thou :—what right is thine
To give me liberty ? Am I a slave
To thee, or slave to Carthage ?

Amil. 'Tis not fure
For thee to weigh if benefits receiv'd—

Reg. Great is indeed the benefit ! to make me
A criminal, a fugitive, a wretch
Alien from truth——

Amil. Thy preservation now,
Thy life's at stake. Thou know'st, at thy return
What torments Carthage has for thee prepar'd.
Thou know'st that there thou wilt to all be made
A dread example.

Reg. Dost thou know, Amilcar,
What Romans are ? And dost thou know they live,
They breathe for honour. This the constant spur
Of every deed, its object and its end ?
With looks unchang'd we here are taught to die,
And every suffering scorn that gives us glory,
While only base dishonour causes fear.

Amil. High founding words and flattering to
the sense !
With me they little weigh : I know that life
Is dear to all, that thou thyself——

Reg. Too much
Thou dost abuse my patience. Let thy ships
Approach the shore : collect thy scatter'd train,
Complete thy task, barbarian, and be silent.

Amil.

Amil. Thy looks may thus intrepid show,
Thy tongue insult a noble foe,
And every foul reproach bestow
Amilcar to defy.
On Tiber's banks thy words severe
Unanswer'd pass Amilcar's ear,
But soon, rash man, expect to hear
In Afric his reply. [*Exit.*

S C E N E VI.

Enter ATTILIA.

Reg. [*to himself.*] Publius not yet return'd?
And Manlius too?

[*to Att.*] Attilia! ha! what brings thee hither
thus

With hasty step, and looks of seeming joy?

Att. Our fate, my father, now depends on thee.
Observant of thy counsels, Rome rejects
Th' exchange or peace; but thou may'st here re-
main.

Reg. Yes, with the shame——

Att. O! no: on this the Senate
Pronounce their sentence thus: it rests with thee
To stay or to depart. “Thine oath was pledg'd
“When thou wert captive, and a captive's oath
“Can never bind himself.”

Reg. Who fears not death

Is

Is always free, and he who shall, to excuse
His actions, plead constraint, will but confess
His own degenerate baseness. Regulus
Swore what he will'd to swear, and having sworn,
Will now depart.

S C E N E VII.

Enter PUBLIUS.

Pub. You hope it, sir, in vain.

Reg. And what shall stay me then ?

Pub. The united people.

My father, nothing longer can restrain them ;
All fly impatient to the port to oppose
Your passage to the ships : the streets of Rome
In other parts are all deserted now.

Reg. And where is Manlius ?

Pub. He alone has dar'd
To stem the general torrent ; but in vain
He prayers and threats employs ; none hear his
voice,

And none obey. The people's headstrong fury
Increases every moment. Pale with fear
The lictors scarcely in their hands sustain
The trembling fasces ; and, in such distraction,
Not one attends the consular command.

Reg. Farewell, Attilia—Publius, follow me.

[going.

Att.

Att. Ah ! whither would you go ?

Reg. To assist my friend ;
To wipe away from Rome her foul disgrace ;
To keep for me the honour of my chains,
And hence depart, or on these shores expire.

[going.]

Att. Ah ! no, my father, should you leave me
thus—

[weeping.]

Reg. Attilia, to a daughter's tender name,
Much to thy sex and years I have till now
Indulgent given—Enough—no more of sorrow—
Let not thy woman's tears conspire with Rome
To rob thy father of his promis'd triumph.

Att. Alas ! for me such anguish—

[weeping.]

Reg. Well I know
Thy anguish is to lose me ; but remember,
Such trials wives and daughters oft must feel
Who boast the honour of a Roman name.

Att. All other proofs with joy—

Reg. What proofs, Attilia ?
Say, would'st thou go to meet the conscript Fathers
Amidst the assembled senate, with thy counsels
To regulate the destiny of Rome ?
Or rather with the helmet o'er thy brows,
Would'st thou, in fighting to subdue the foe,
Endure the toil of arms ? If thou'rt unfit
To meet misfortune for thy country's sake
Without such abject weakness, tell me, daughter,
What

What wilt thou do to serve her ?

Att. O ! 'tis true.

But yet such constancy——

Reg. It is indeed

A virtue hard to practice ; but, Attilia,

Thou art my daughter and thou wilt attain it.

[*going.*

Att. Yes, all I can I'll imitate my father,
Your great example—but, O Heaven ! you leave
me,

And leave me in displeasure !—I have lost
Your wonted love.

Reg. O ! no, I love thee still :
Believe me not displeas'd ; and as a token,
Take this embrace—yet let not this embrace
Melt thee to softness, but inspire thy mind
With fortitude and honour.

Att. Ah ! my father,
You leave me thus, and leave without a sigh.

Reg. I bear for thee a father's love,
But little should a father prove,
If leaving thee, I left behind
Th' example of an abject mind.

My

My breast, like every mortal, bears
A heart that feels a mortal's cares ;
But passions in my heart obey,
And rule in thine with tyrant sway.

[*Exit with Pub.*]

S C E N E VIII.

ATTILIA *alone.*

Be firm, my heart ! And O ! be banish'd far
All weak affections ; from their sources dry
These woman's tears : enough of useless sorrow :
Enough of cruel doubts. My native virtue
Must kindle with a father's just reproof.
Let not Attilia be the only branch
Unworthy of the stock from which she springs.

S C E N E IX.

Enter BARCE.

Bar. Is it then true, Attilia ? In despite
Of Rome's united people, of the Senate,
The Augurs and his friends ; of all the world ;
Will Regulus depart ?

Att. [*firmly.*] 'Tis all most true.

Bar. But whence proceeds such unexampled
frenzy ?

Att.

Att. With more respect let Barce speak of heroes.

Bar. How ! does Attilia then indeed approve
Her father's blind perverseness ?

Att. I adore
The unshaken virtue of a father's heart.

Bar. A virtue that delivers him to chains,
To hostile fury, and a shameful death.

Att. Be silent. Know, those chains, that hostile
fury,
That shameful death, [*she relapses into tenderness*]
will prove my father's triumph.

Bar. Dost thou exult at this ?

Att. O Heaven ! [*aside, weeps.*]

Bar. For me
I never can conceive——

Att. No : those who drew
Their breath, ill-fated, in a barbarous clime,
Conceive not how a daughter's mind enjoys
A father's deathless name.

Bar. And yet you weep ?

Att. Again may peace relieve the breast,
When grief, that late each thought oppress'd,
Is spent in kindly tears :
As shines the sun serenely bright,
Whene'er the cloud that veil'd his light
In showers dissolv'd appears. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E X.

BARCE alone.

What strange ideas does the love of praise
Excite in Rome ?—With envy Manlius views
His rival's chains ; while Regulus abhors
The public pity that would save his life.
The daughter glories in her father's sufferings ;
And Publius, (this surpasses all belief)
Publius, my beauty's slave, for honour's sake,
Resigns the mistress whom his soul adores.

The heart that thus can love's desire
Without a sigh resign,
May shew a virtue I admire,
But never wish it mine.

In Rome a fond pursuit of fame
May every thought control ;
But, thanks to Heaven, no Roman dame,
I boast no Roman soul. [*Exit.*

SCENE.

S C E N E XI.

*Magnificent porticoes on the banks of the Tiber ;
ships ready for the embarkation of REGULUS. A
plank laid to the nearest ship. A numerous crowd
of people that block up the passage to the ships.
The Africans are seen on board. Licitors attend-
ing on the Consul.*

MANLIUS, LICINIUS.

Lic. Rome never will consent that Regulus
Should quit the port.

Man. The Senate and myself ;
Are we no part of Rome ?

Lic. The united people
Are far the greater part.

Man. But not the noblest.

Lic. At least more generous and humane. In-
spir'd
With love and gratitude, we seek to save
The life of Regulus.

Man. And we—his honour.

Lic. His honour——

Man. 'Tis enough—I come not here
To hold debate with thee—What ho ! let each
Leave free the passage. [to the people.

Lic. No—let none remove.

Man. 'Tis I command obedience.

Lic. I forbid it.

Man. Dar'st thou, Licinius, thus oppose the
Conful?

Lic. And dar'st thou, Manlius, thus oppose the
Tribune?

Man. Soon shall we see—Now, lictors, clear the
pafs.

[the Lictors raise their fasces and advance.]

Lic. Defend it, Romans.

[the people prepare to oppose them.]

Man. O ye Gods! with arms
Is thus my power resisted? Is it thus
The majesty——

Lic. The majesty of Rome
Dwells in the people: this thou hast insulted
By such contention.

People. Regulus shall stay.

Man. *[to the people.]* Permit me but to shew
what now misleads
Your better judgment.

People. Regulus shall still
Remain.

Man. Yet hear me——

People. Regulus shall stay.

SCENE

SCENE LAST.

*Enter REGULUS, and with him ATTILIA,
AMILCAR, PUBLIUS and BARCE.*

Reg. [*entering.*] Ha! Regulus shall stay! and
is my sense

Deceiv'd, or may I credit what I hear?
Is perfidy requir'd? Requir'd in Rome?
From me requir'd? What people has this land,
This wretched land produc'd? What lips avow
A wish so infamous? What heart conceives it?
Where, where are now the noble race of Brutus,
Fabritius and Camillus? Glorious names!
Shall Regulus then stay? For what offence
Have I deserv'd to merit thus your hatred?

Lic. O sir! our love would break your cruel
chains.

Reg. And what were Regulus without his chains?
'Tis these will hand me down to latest times
A great example; to my foes a shame;
And to my country, honour: but of these
Deprive me, what must Regulus be nam'd?
A perjur'd slave, a worthless fugitive.

Lic. Your word was plighted to a faithless people,
And plighted when in bonds: the Augurs say—

Reg. No more. O! let us leave to savage na-
tions,

The untutor'd Arab, and the cruel Moor,
Such shameful pleas to sanction breach of faith.
Be Rome to all the world a pattern still
Of uncorrupted honour.

Lic. What may Rome
Not fear to lose, in losing thee, her father ?

Reg. Let Rome reflect that father is but mortal ;
That now he stoops beneath the weight of years ;
That life creeps languid thro' his shrivell'd veins ;
That he no longer now can shed his blood,
Or toil for her ; that nought for him remains
But, as a Roman ought, to meet his end.
Heaven opens to me now a splendid path ;
I now can close my latter days with glory :
It cannot be—I know, I know too well
The hearts of Romans. Every one whose birth
Gave him with me to breathe one common air
That fans the Capitol, from Regulus
Will not in thought dissent. I know that each
Applauds me in his heart with generous envy ;
That midst th' emotions, by a tender feeling
Unwarily betray'd, he breathes to Heaven
His ardent vows for fortitude like mine.
No more of weakness then, but cast to earth
Those ill-tim'd weapons. O ! delay no longer
The triumph I have fought. My friends, my
children,
My fellow-citizens ! I, as a friend,
Entreat of each ; as citizen exhort you,

And

And as a father let me now command.

Att. [*aside.*] O Heaven! already each obeys
his mandate.

Pub. O! mighty Powers! see every hand dis-
arm'd.

Lic. Behold the pass is clear'd.

Reg. Accept my thanks,
Propitious Gods! the path is free. Amilcar,
Ascend thy ship, I follow where thou lead'st.

Amil. [*aside.*] I now begin to envy what I hear.
[*ascends his ship.*]

Reg. Romans, farewell! and let our parting now
Be worthy of us. Thanks to Heaven! I leave you,
And leave you Romans. Ah! preserve unfulfilled
That mighty name, and be the arbiters
Of human kind, till all the world become,
By your example, Romans. Guardian Gods!
That watch this happy land; protecting Powers
Of great Æneas' offspring! I intrust
To you this race of heroes. Still defend
This soil, these dwellings, these paternal walls.
O! grant that valour, glory, constancy,
Justice and truth may ever here reside;
And should some evil star, with adverse beams
E'er threat the Capitol, see, mighty Gods!
See Regulus—let Regulus alone
Be made your victim, and the wrath of Heaven
Be all consum'd on my devoted head:

Let Rome unhurt—but why those tears—
——Farewell !

CHORUS.

O ! thou, the glory of our clime,
Father of Rome, farewell !
By thee our triumphs snatch'd from time
What future tongues shall tell ?

But dearly must the glory cost
To Rome that loses thee :
An age again shall scarcely boast
A Regulus to see.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ROMULUS.

ROMULUS AND HERSILIA.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ROMULUS, King and founder of ROME.

HERSILIA, a Sabine Princess.

VALERIA, a noble Roman lady, in love with
ACRONTES, forsaken by him.

HOSTILIUS, a Roman patrician, friend to ROMU-
LUS, in love with VALERIA.

CURTIUS, Prince of the ANTEMNATI, father of
HERSILIA.

ACRONTES, Prince of the Ceninenfians, an im-
placable enemy to ROMULUS.

CHORUS of the Roman people.

The action is represented in the ancient city of
ROME.

ROMULUS AND HERSILIA.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A great square in Rome, surrounded with private and public buildings, part unfinished, intermixed with trees. The Capitol, with a rustic appearance, an altar and a fire kindled before an ancient oak consecrated to Jupiter, from which are paths leading down to the plain. The altar, the mountain, the buildings and the trunks of the trees adorned with festoons of flowers, in honour of the solemnization of the nuptials between the Roman youths and the Sabine virgins.

A numerous crowd of Warriors, Liſtors, and People, ſpectators. While to the ſound of various inſtruments, that accompany the following Chorus, the new married couples deſcend by ſeveral paths from the hill, and mix in a dance upon the plain, ROMULUS with HERSILIA, and HOSTILIUS with VALERIA, by different paths ſlowly follow the proceſſion, and none remain above but a number of prieſts round the altar of Jupiter.

CHORUS

CHORUS.

Propitious from Olympus' height,
On glad Tarpeia's rock alight,
And every happy nuptial rite
Protecting Powers ! attend.

PART CHORUS.

O ! God of arms ! do thou inspire
In manly breasts the hero's fire,
And bid the virtues of the fire
From son to son descend.

CHORUS.

Propitious from Olympus' height
Protecting Powers ! attend.

PART CHORUS.

O ! Goddess ! whose benignant care
Can man's decaying race repair,
The hearts of these, the brave and fair,
Inflame with faithful love,

CHORUS.

Propitious from Olympus' height,
On glad Tarpeia's rock alight,
And every happy nuptial rite,
Protecting Powers ! attend.

Rom. At length, O ! most ador'd, and conquering fair,
Who triumph o'er your victors, we behold
Your hands with Romans join'd in spousal vows.
Since Heaven has granted to this infant kingdom
In you its dearest hopes, Ah ! make with us
The sweet exchange of love : for not impell'd
By hatred or revenge, or heat of youth,
The Roman valour fought so dear a prize.
Ah ! deem more nobly of us. With the bands
Of near alliance would we hope to change
Our enmity to friendship. Well you know.
That in a chaste asylum ; midst a train
Of holy matrons, in the guardian care
Of Heaven, you have resided, till subdued
By every merit of respectful service,
You willingly fulfill'd the solemn rites.
Disdain not then these humble first attempts
To found a warlike race. The Gods prescribe
No bounds for virtue. Yonder Capitol,
Now rustic and unknown, in times to come
May boast a mightier name. My heart dilates
With every glorious hope. And you, ye fair !
(Now Roman consorts) will with us partake
One common fate ; and while your minds revolve
The present nuptials and the future trophies,
O ! second with your love these happy omens.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Propitious from Olympus' height
On glad Tarpeia's rock alight,
And every happy nuptial rite
Protecting Powers ! attend.

*[while this Chorus is singing the
married couples join again in a
dance and go out.]*

S C E N E II.

ROMULUS, HERSILIA, HOSTILIUS, VALERIA.

Rom. *[to Her.]* And midst so many, whom this
day has blest'd,
Belov'd Hersilia ! must I still remain
Uncertain of my fate ?

Her. O ! Heaven ! *[aside.]*

Host. *[to Val.]* And say,
Cannot the example of the Sabine rigour
Subdu'd at length, for me, Valeria, move
One Roman virgin's heart ?

Val. Ill-fated love ! *[aside.]*

Rom. Ah ! princess, speak.

Her. By thee I was requested,
Not as a bride, but as spectatress, here
To attend the sacred rite : I yielded to thee :
What

What can I further say ? To thee are known
The duties that engross Hersilia's thoughts :
Thou know'st I am a Sabine and a daughter.

Rom. I know I must not hope to obtain thy
hand,

Unless 'tis granted by thy noble father ;
And, trust me, I in thee admire and love
A daughter's strict obedience. Since he first
Repuls'd me harshly, I've again renew'd
My earnest suit. Ah ! while I trembling wait
Th' eventful issue, give me comfort : say,
What share have I, Hersilia, in thy heart ?
Say, dost thou love me ? If the true affections
Of faithful lovers——

Her. Romulus, Ah ! cease,
And do not forfeit thus the former merit,
Of all thy generous cares.

Rom. What crime is mine ?

Her. Freedom of speech, like this, to Sabine
dames,
Our country's usage gives not : never words
Of fond endearment there escape the lips,
'Till first the altar sanctifies the passion.

Rom. What charm has beauty when with virtue
grac'd !

[to Host.] Go, friend, and second my impati-
ence—go,

Ask if the wish'd-for messenger returns ;

Moments

Moments are ages to me.

Hof. More than you
The Roman people brook not this delay.
Eager they languish with their king to see
A consort on the throne. Already now
'Tis whisper'd thou should'st in thy thoughts re-
volve
Some other bride more easy to be won.

Rom. Some other bride! Ah! never must
they hope
Hersilia can be banish'd from this bosom.

Behold the fair, decreed by love
My fondest thoughts to claim:
'Tis she, and she alone shall prove
The object of my flame.

Till now the Gods, of all her kind
Ne'er fram'd a maid so fair:
But with the virtues of her mind,
No outward charms compare.

[*Exit with Hof.*

S C E N E III.

HERSILIA, VALERIA.

Val. And does not then our hero, my Hersilia,
Seem worthy to be lov'd? And if his rule
Cannot sometimes restrain a headstrong people,
At least his wisdom well atones for all.

Her.

Her. I see it truly.

Val. Does thy heart meantime
Plead nothing in his cause ?

Her. I praise his virtues.

Val. But tell me ; does Hersilia love or hate
him ?

Her. Alas ! my friend ; I know not what I feel :
A thousand passions struggle in my bosom,
Unknown before ; and Romulus has left
His looks and words engraven in my soul.
To me he seems the greatest, and the best
The first of mortals ! But, alas ! to me
What, what avails it ? Shall Hersilia prove
A rebel to a father's sacred will ?
Forgetful of the Sabines' rigid duties,
Cast off her wonted constancy of spirit
For which she once was fam'd'd ?—O ! never,
never !

Thou God, who rul'st the feeble mind,
Now vainly seek'st in me to find
What sways so oft the female kind,
Thou art no God for me.

In vain thy threaten'd chains prepare :
With firmness arm'd to break the snare ;
My soul, for ever free, shall dare
Thy boasted chains and thee.

[*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E IV.

VALERIA *alone.*

Yes, fage Hersilia, though she little knows it,
Is warm'd with love, but warm'd with noble fire ;
Whilst I, unhappy as I am, adore
A false, ungrateful lover. Well I know
By many a proof Acrontes has deceiv'd me ;—
What do I fee !—He comes—
And yet, O ! Heaven !—

S C E N E V.

*Enter ACRONTES in a Roman habit.**Acr.* [*sees her as he enters.*] I'll-fated meeting.*Val.* Whither dost thou go ?

O ! unadvis'd—while all the Sabine race
Conspire the fall of Rome ; wilt thou, a Sabine,
In borrow'd vesture, risk thy safety here ?

Acr. I fear no risk to bless my eyes with thee.

Val. Thou false one ! Well I know thou heed'ft
not longer

Thy plighted faith to me, Thy bosom now
Glows only for Hersilia.

Acr. Mine, Valeria ?

Val. Acrontes, thine, Think'ft thou to me
unknown

Thy

Thy suit in vain preferr'd, her fire's refusal,
Thy rage of disappointment ?

Acr. O ! thou wrong'st me :
I call down Heaven to witness——

Val. Oh ! forbear.
I would not blush at perjuries like thine—
Go—if thou heed'st not me, yet heed thyself,
If me thou dost despise, despise not yet
My friendly counsel : worthless as thou art,
Let me not tremble to behold thy danger.

Acr. Canst thou be thus alarm'd to see my
danger,
And yet, Valeria, think me still a traitor ?

Val. Yes, I'm deceiv'd ; and know too well
Who acts the traitor's part ;
Yet cannot, O ye Power's ! expel
His image from my heart.

Yes, cruel, thus by Fate oppress'd
Unheard-of woes I prove ;
For while the treason I detest,
The traitor still I love.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E VI.

ACRONTES alone.

This meeting is ill-omen'd to my purpose :
 But let me still be constant. Rome shall fall :
 I only, with my Ceninenfian bands,
 Prepar'd for instant action, will impel
 The Sabines' tardy vengeance—But Herfilia—
 She must be first secur'd ; a hostage left
 Like her, might check the ardour of my soul
 With chilling doubts. Already have I one
 To guide me to her—but as yet he comes not—
 He must be fought. [going.]

S C E N E VII.

Enter CURTIUS.

Ha ! Curtius !

Cur. Ha ! Acrontes [meeting and gazing
at each other for some time.]

Acr. And art thou he ?*Cur.* And am I not deceiv'd.*Acr.* The sovereign of th' Antemnati in Rome ?*Cur.* And here the Ceninenfian prince ?*Acr.* At length

Impatient of your long-delay'd repentment,

I gave

I gave the reins to mine. Myself, of all
Our injur'd Sabines, will alone revenge
The common cause. This day I mean to make
The assault on Rome; and hence it first behoves
To explore the weak and least defended parts :
This task I trust to none but to Acrontes.
O ! if a zeal like mine inflame thy breast,
Unite with me ; suspend all former hatred.
I, from this hour, expunge from my remembrance
The wrong thou didst me to refuse Hersilia :
Now speak we but of honour. Henceforth cease
All rancour for our private injuries,
Till to the universal world be shewn
Our vow'd revenge for every public wrong.

Cur. But know'st thou not to-day what new
affront

We must sustain ? This day they celebrate,
Between the Roman youth and Sabine maids,
The hymeneal rites. The certain tidings
Of this have reach'd us, and the festive shews
I see on every hand confirm the truth.
I cannot bear the thought : unconscious yet
What course to take, I haste to snatch my daughter
From these detested nuptials.

Acr. Curtius, now
Too late thou com'st.

Cur. Say'st thou ?

Acr. The nuptials, prince,

Already are completed.

Cur. Heavenly Powers !

And was Hersilia too—It cannot be—
Too well I know her : ever was her mind
Respectful, duteous ; and her life was led
In due observance of her sex's laws,
And firm obedience to a father's will.

Acr. And yet is she a bride.

Cur. Who dares affirm it ?—
How know'st thou this ?

Cur. But now, in this attire
Disguis'd, and mingled with the crowd, I saw
The nuptial pomp.

Cur. And was Hersilia too——

Acr. Hersilia too was there amongst the brides,
The joyous brides of Rome's ferocious youth.

Cur. O ! cruel stroke !

[Sits down in an agony of rage and grief.]

Acr. But wherefore linger now
In tardy sloth ? Prevention comes too late,
But vengeance still is ours. Haste then, unite
Thy scatter'd warriors, and with me combine
In impious Rome's destruction.

Cur. *[not attending to him.]* O ! Hersilia !
The child of Curtius and a Sabine maid !

Acr. He hears me not—his madness of despair
May raise some tumult, or perchance obstruct

My

My purpos'd scheme to bear Herfilia hence :
'Twere wisdom to provide against this evil.
[*to Cur.*] Then tell me, Curtius, may I learn from
thee——

Cur. O ! leave me, leave me !

Acr. Must I leave thee, Curtius ?
Then be it so—now to my great design. [*Exit.*

S C E N E VIII.

CURTIVS *alone.*

And is Herfilia then indeed become
A willing Roman wife ? Midst all my woes
This, this I little fear'd.—O ! perjur'd girl !
Perfidious ! vainly shalt thou hope to escape
Thy punishment : not earth shall yield to thee
A wish'd asylum ; think not e'er to find
A shelter from my rage, though plac'd beside
Thy new-made spouse, or in the arms of Jove !

Hence thoughts of every gentle kind,
Affections that my heart remind

I bore a parent's name :
To madness and revenge resign'd,
The father I disclaim.

[*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E IX.

Apartments in the palace destined for HERSILIA, on the Palatine hill.

HERSILIA, HOSTILIUS. T

Host. But dost thou know, Hersilia, all the merits

That Romulus can boast ?

Her. I know them all.

Host. And yet thou lov'st him not ?

Her. With us, Hostilius,
Love is the child of duty.

Host. Then for Rome
No hope remains but from a father's mandate.

Her. And that were vain to expect—I know
my father.

Host. If adverse thus thy fire reject our king ;
If coldly thou, Hersilia, canst receive him,
At least thou may'st secure our nation's peace.

Her. Who I ? Say how.

Host. The people wish to see
Their king espous'd ; and nearly this desire
Degenerates into tumult. If the fates
Deny thee to our wishes, Romulus
May from thy counsel choose another bride.

Her. What mean'st thou? By my counsel?

Hofst. Yes, Hersilia.

Her. But say what right have I—

Hofst. That right which love
Claims o'er his heart; and who shall hope to guide
Like thee his soul's affection?

Her. Must Hersilia
Be call'd to fix the destiny of Rome?
Shall I, a stranger, seek for you a queen?

Hofst. Thou need'st not seek: behold her near.

Her. Her name?

Hofst. Valeria.

Her. Ha! Valeria?

Hofst. Since the throne
Must not be honour'd with Hersilia's virtues,
At least it never can receive disgrace
From noble, chaste Valeria.

Her. If thou think'st
Hersilia can avail—but sure, Hostilius,
'Tis wondrous strange—Valeria is a lover.

Hofst. I know it well; and for her evil fate
She loves Acrontes: 'twere a deed of friendship
To break such chains as ill beseem Valeria.

Her. It may be so—yet—

Hofst. Romulus this moment
In search of thee approaches.

Her. Romulus!

Hofst.

Hof. Even he : fupport, Herfilia, my defign ;
Ufe every means——

Her. Thou would'ft instruct me furely
To rave like thee—Who can divine thy purpofe ?
I till this moment deem'd thy fighs of love
Breath'd for Valeria, yet thou bid'ft me give
Her beauties to another. Doubtlefs firft
Thou haft deceiv'd, or muft deceive me now.

Hof. Ah ! no, believe not that I once deceiv'd,
Or I deceive thee now : beyond myfelf
I love Valeria ; hence my warmeft wifhes
Purfue her honour, glory and her peace.

With lying boast thofe lovers claim
The praife to faithful lovers due ;
Who in the object of their flame
A felfifh happinefs purfue.

What generous paffions fway his breaft,
What love is to his fair-one shown,
Who when his power can make her bleft
Derives not from her blifs his own ? [*Exit.*

S C E N E X.

HERSILIA alone.

'Tis virtue fure to fecond the defign
Of generous love—but pause awhile, Herfilia,
And weigh the task enjoin'd. To Romulus
Shall

Shall I give counsel ? Make him this request ?
And offer him a bride ?—My heart revolts
From such a thought—What words shall I employ
To speak—Alas ! what mean these sudden doubts
That suit not Sabine honour ? Whence the tumult
That reigns within this bosom ?

S C E N E XI.

Enter CURTIUS.

Cur. Have I found thee ?
Degenerate girl !

Her. What voice is that ? My father !
O ! fir——

Cur. Be silent ; nor with lips like thine
Profane that name.

Her. Alas ! my father.

Cur. Cast
Those daring eyes to earth. A Roman wife
Can ne'er be Curtius' daughter.

Her. Ha ! a wife !
A wife, Herfilia ?

Cur. Perjur'd as thou art,
Add not a falsehood to increase thy guilt.
Wert thou not now, with thy rebellious friends,
Before the hated altar ?

Her. A spectatrefs,

But

But not a bride.

Cur. And was not then thy hand——

Her. Hersilia's hand will never be bestow'd
Without a father's sanction.

Cur. Art thou then——

Her. I am a Sabine still.

Cur. An offer'd throne
Will never change——

Her. A throne to me were vile,
Unless to thee I ow'd it.

Cur. And the threats
Of hostile rage——

Her. No other threats, my father,
Could make me tremble, but the threats alone
Deriv'd from thy displeasure. Death itself
Were far less dreadful than the just reproach
Of him to whom I owe my life, my all!

Cur. Thou dearest part! thou treasure of my
foul!
Come to my breast: forgive my hasty rage;
A happier day for me till now—Hersilia,
Thou tremblest!

Her. 'Tis for thee, for thee, my father,
I tremble—On the instant Romulus
Is here expected—Should'st thou now be found
In this disguise, amidst a hostile city,
Alas! who knows—O! let us hence, my lord,
Where'er

Where'er thou goest I will pursue thy steps.

Cur. No, daughter, this might hazard all, and
make

Our hopes abortive. We must patient wait
The favour of the night,

Her. Meantime—O Heavens!
Behold he comes! [*looking out.*]

Cur. I go—take heed, my child;
Thy fears betray me not.

Her. Where canst thou now
In safety wait?

Cur. A faithful friend is near
To second my design. When time shall serve
Expect my quick return—'till then farewell!
[*Exit.*]

S C E N E XII.

HERSILIA alone.

O! me unhappy! midst my adverse fortune
There wanted only this, of every evil
The worst, to tremble for a father's safety.
In this distressful state how shall I meet
The eyes of Romulus?—Alas! he comes—
Let me avoid his presence. [*going.*]

SCENE

S C E N E XIII.

Enter ROMULUS.

Rom. Dost thou fly me ?
Fly me, Hersilia ?

Her. [*aside.*] O ye Powers ! assist me.

Rom. Fear not, O ! princess, I shall speak of
love :

No, I too much respect the native manners
Held sacred by thy sex ; yet surely these
Are more than virtue claims. To curb my passion
I must confess is pain ; but greater pain
To hazard thy displeasure.

Her. [*aside.*] Generous prince !

Rom. It will not sure be deem'd I speak of love,
To say but this : if Heaven and if thy father
Had given me to possess Hersilia's hand,
No bliss had equall'd mine.

Her. [*aside.*] Alas ! Hersilia.

Rom. Thou would'st have added splendor to the
throne :

In thee had Rome beheld her guardian goddess,
And I the unrivall'd sovereign of my heart.

Her. My lord—no more—permit me to retire.

Rom. Am I then hateful to thee ?

Her.

Her. [*aside.*] Cruel fate !

Rom. If with the Sabines 'tis a crime to love,
Yet fure your laws compel you not to hate ;
And 'twixt fuch adverfe paffions fouls like yours
May reft uncensur'd ; and though Heaven forbids
me

To find in thee a lover and a wife,
Hersilia may be yet a grateful friend.

Her. [*aside.*] Where am I ?—Cruel Powers !
shall I depart,

Or ftill remain ? How fain I would excufe
My feeming rigour—but I dare not fpeak,
And every accent that I ftrove to utter
Converts between my lips to broken fighs.

Rom. Is ftill Hersilia ftlent ? Will fhe not
Vouchsafe me one poor look ? Ah ! tell me when
I have offended ? Say, what crime is mine ?

Her. Sir—if you think—[*aside.*] O Heaven !

Rom. Why doft thou pause ?
Some new diftreffs—for never till this hour
Thy heart has struggled with fuch varied paffion.
Thou blufheft now, and now thy cheek is pale :
It feems thou fain would'ft tell what yet thy tongue
In vain would fpeak, while every look confeffes
A bofom tortur'd with conflicting pangs.
In pity fay——

Her. O fir ! I cannot fpeak.

[*weeps.*]

Rom.

Rom. Alas ! what mean those tears that flow
From forrows of the heart ?

Her. Ah me ! I die—but dare not now
The pangs I feel impart.

Rom. Am I then guilty of thy grief ?

Her. I would——farewell.

Rom. And wherefore go ?

Her. My stay to neither yields relief.

Rom. Yet leave me not, Hersilia, so.

Both. Ah ! who like me by fate oppress'd,
E'er knew such cruel pain ?

I ne'er till now, howe'er distress'd,
Have known such passions rend my breast
As I this day sustain. [*Exeunt severally.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T II. S C E N E I.

An inner apartment of the palace, from which is a view of the Porta Carmentalis, and the Tarpeian Rock.

HERSILIA *alone.*

Alas ! 'tis all too true, and nought avails
Still to conceal this weakness from myself.
I am no longer now the austere Hersilia ;
The first of every thought is Romulus :
Unconscious what I say, his name for ever
Dwells on my lips. If any, if my presence,
But speak of Romulus, I feel the glow
Of mantling blushes : oft as he approaches,
I am disturb'd, the colour leaves my cheek :
I'm silent, I'm confus'd ; while in my breast,
My heart beats quick with mingled grief and joy,
If this be not, ah ! tell me what is love ?
Since thou so ill canst guard thee from the foe,
Contend no more, Hersilia—fly, O ! fly ;
And save at least thy glory by thy flight,
For flight in love is victory.

SCENE

S C E N E II.

Enter CURTIUS.

Cur. My daughter—
Hersilia.

Her. Ah ! my father, let us hence
Without delay—if now thou com'st to seek me,
Behold I am prepar'd.

Cur. I come, my child,
To warn thee of a danger unforeseen,
That threatens thee. The Ceninenfian prince
Is now in Rome : with him I have convers'd,
He feign'd to quit the city : but this instant,
Near thy apartment, from afar again
I saw the infidious prince : he doubtless plans
Some dark design : but late he fought thy hand.
At my refusal fir'd, he gives the reins
To mad resentment, bending all his thoughts
To outward violence and fraud. Take heed.

Her. Ah ! then, what longer should detain us
here ?

Let us depart.

Cur. It is not yet the time,
But rest in peace a few short moments more.

Her. In Rome, alas ! there is no peace for me.
I cannot bear this dwelling : take me, father,
Take me from all I suffer : let me fly

From

From every object here ; and breathe at length
The tranquil Sabine air.

Cur. My dearest daughter,
How am I charm'd to hear thy fond impatience,
In which the Sabine virtue brightly shines.
Be calm : ere long expect me to return,
And give thee freedom. Let this thought mean-
while

Console thee, that thou may'st with conscious
pride

Review thyself. Let every daughter learn
From thee, my dear Herfilia, to respect
Her country and her father ; triumph o'er
Th' enfeebling perils of her sex and youth,
And, midst the flatteries of insidious love,
Preserve the free dominion o'er her heart :
My hope ! my glory ! and my best support !

When, I, ye Gods ! to thought recall
That such a daughter's mine ;
Whate'er may chance, I pardon all,
Nor more at Heaven repine.

On me let adverse Fortune frown,
And woes on woes increase ;
That dear remembrance still shall crown
A father's days with peace.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E III.

HERSILIA *alone.*

Where shall I hide myself? These praises given,
 So ill deserv'd, are to my foul reproaches.
 And shall a father prize in thee, Hersilia,
 That virtue which thou hast not? Shall he thus
 Deceiv'd, applaud thee, love thee, honour thee,
 This canst thou hear, and not with shame expire?
 Does not thy conscience shrink from such approval,
 Or feel a generous impulse to deserve it?
 It shall be so—and flying shall secure thee.—
 But in the sight of Romulus, O! Heaven!
 I dare not trust myself—by proof I know
 How cruel is the trial.—Then in me
 Is love necessity? [*she sits.*] To me alone
 Has Heaven denied the liberty of choice?
 Ah! no—refuse, to guide the stubborn passions,
 Those reins, Hersilia, thou hast thrown aside:
 A firm determin'd virtue conquers all.
 My fears are vanish'd now: the greater trial,
 The greater is my triumph; I abjure
 The affections I condemn. Henceforth Hersilia
 Decrees to be the mistress of her will.
 Now, where is Romulus? Hostilius, say.

[*rises with firmness.*]

SCENE

S C E N E IV.

Enter HOSTILIUS.

Host. He comes this instant from the senatehouse,
And hastes to his apartment.

Her. May Herfilia
Have leave to see him ?

Host. Leave to see him, princess ?
Forgive me, but such doubt were most unjust.

Her. I would converse with him.

Host. Then Rome perhaps
May cherish hopes propitious to her vows,
And Romulus most welcome to his love.

Her. Herfilia was not born for him or Rome.
But if, as thou hast said, indeed 'tis true,
The will of Romulus depends on mine ;
This day shall thy Valeria be a queen.

Host. Ah ! then——

S C E N E V.

Enter VALERIA.

Her. [*to Val.*] My friend, if happy stars assist,
I go to obtain for thee a regal crown.

Val. For me !

Her. For thee : but think not mine the merit
Of such a choice : I owe to good Hostilius
The generous thought : in thee has he propos'd
A comfort worthy of the king of Rome.
With reason I approve, and now aspire,
In such a work, to emulate his praise.

Val. Believe me grateful : but you both dispose
Of that for me, which is not mine to give.
My love, you know, is plighted to a lover :
Though faithless I am his, and love becomes
In me necessity.

Her. The fond pretence
To excuse our weakness. Let us use our will
To better purpose ; or, if we refuse
To break those ties, which love has render'd dear,
Accuse not Fate for errors all our own.

Let none against his stars exclaim,
Or midst his sufferings Fortune blame,
Who still a willing slave remains.
Of what avail are tears and sighs
To his relief, who only tries
To find his pleasure in his chains ?

[*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E VI.

HOSTILIUS, VALERIA,

Val. What can this mean, Hostilius ? I believ'd
Hersilia's love for Romulus ; but now,
By proof, I find my error. Once I deem'd
In thy affections I had borne a part ;
But now I find thou didst but mock my ear
With flattery feigning love. I own, Hostilius,
I know not what to think.

Host. If you have err'd
In deeming love had touch'd Hersilia's heart,
I cannot well divine ; but this I know,
I love Valeria with the tenderest passion,
And ever will preserve for her my flame.

Val. Then wherefore seek in me your future
queen ?

Host. In what does your advancement to the
throne

Oppose my love ? The passion that I feel,
Is far, far different in its purity
From that of vulgar lovers. Ever still
The admirer of your virtues, jealous ever
Of all that may advance Valeria's honour,
Exulting in her fortune, I shall still
Through life adore her, as I now adore.

Val. Ah ! peace, Hostilius, spare me the remorse

My heart must feel to be to thee ungrateful.
What lover e'er could boast a love like thine ?
Ah ! learn at least that well I know thee now ;
And were the ties, in which, alas ! I languish,
Less hard to be dissolv'd, the noble gift
Of such a heart as thine, in my ambition
Would far outshine the splendors of a throne.

When first a lover I became
A lover's sighs to prove,
Why did I feed another flame,
And sigh not for thy love ?

Ah ! why so little does the mind
Its first affections know,
That where we deem our bliss to find
Too oft we find our woe ? [Exit.

S C E N E VII.

HOSTILIUS alone.

O ! Heaven, I'm not deceiv'd. Valeria now
Is more than grateful to me. My affection
In all its purity, to that dear breast
Is not a stranger. O ! the certainty
Of such a bliss ! What rapture do I feel !
In this excess of joy, my soul must own
No greater recompense awaits on love.

If

If one there be who little knows
The blifs that now my foul o'erflows,
He well may pity claim :
And surely brief his joys muſt prove,
Who never knew ſuch thoughts as move
My panting heart, ſince gentle Love
Here kindled firſt his flame. [Exit.

S C E N E VIII.

*Apartments, with covered walks on the ſide of the
Palatine hill.*

ROMULUS *alone.*

O ! no—'tis not alone the Sabine rigour
That agitates Herfilia. In that face
And from thoſe lips methought I ſaw, I heard—
Ah ! Romulus, begirt with threatening foes,
Amidſt a growing empire's many cares,
How has thy boſom found a place for love ?
Such weakneſs—Surely 'tis not always weakneſs,
When love with reaſon joins ; it changes then
Its former nature. My Herfilia ſhines
The friendly ſtar that regulates my thoughts
With more than mortal influence. Yes, her virtue,
The ancient ſplendor of her anceſtry,
The welfare of the realm, the people's ſuffrage—
But hark ! what clafh of ſwords is this I hear ?

What means the sudden tumult? *[looking out.*

Acr. [within.] No—this weapon
Is not an easy conquest.

Rom. How? My guards
In conflict with a Roman?

S C E N E IX.

Enter ACRONTES.

Acr. Adverse Gods! *[dropping his sword as
he enters.*

Rom. Forbear, my friends, and touch not him,
who now
Has no defence.—Ye Powers! Am I deceiv'd?
Thou art not sure Acrontes?

Acr. I am he. *[haughtily.*

Rom. Acrontes and in Rome? In my apartments?
In Roman vestments? What is thy design?

Acr. Of this I render no account to thee.

Rom. Thy boldness suits but ill the present time;
Remember now Acrontes where thou art.

Acr. Where'er Acrontes is, with him he bears
His valour still,

Rom. But, prince, such valour here
In thee were rashness. Speak: is it the love
Thou vainly bear'st Hersilia, or the hatred

Long

Long nourish'd against me, that blinds thy reason ?

Acr. Spare, Romulus, thy questions : know I
come not

To answer at thy bidding : use thy fortune.

I stand determin'd and prepar'd for all :

I know what treatment I decreed for thee,

Had now that state been thine, to which the fates
(Adverse to valour) have reduc'd Acrontes :

And hence I know what to expect from thee.

Rom. Thou dost but ill presage,—Lictors, return
His weapon to the Ceninenfian prince ;
And you, ye warriors, give him conduct safe
Beyond the precincts of the Roman walls.

Acr. My sword !

Rom. Receive it, and in yonder field
Regain, with this, what thou hast lost in Rome.

Acr. Thy folly, Romulus, may cost thee dear ;
Revenge, for ostentation thus neglected,
Too late thou wilt repent.

Rom. Revenge ? On whom ?

If thou'rt a madman, I forgive thy frenzy :

If thou'rt a lover, thou hast then my pity ;

A foe, I heed thee not ; and if thou com'st

A traitor, vers'd in treason, I despise thee.

Acr.

Acr. Contemn me now with haughty speech,
This arm perhaps ere long may teach
Thy tongue an humbler strain.
Then see if still thy pride will dare
From yonder Capitol afar,
As here at Rome, in fields of war
To insult me once again. [Exit.]

S C E N E X.

Enter HERSILIA.

Her. [entering.] Behold him—To complete my
victory
The time now calls upon me.

Rom. [to himself.] Wondrous strange
Such courage and such fierceness !

Her. [to herself.] Gods ! what means
This new enchantment ? In his presence now
I feel again disturb'd.

Rom. [to himself.] And can it be,
Such valour should be found to inspire a soul
Where dwells so little virtue ?

Her. [to herself.] No, Hersilia,
Let not thy throbbing heart disarm thy purpose :
The boldest warrior finds in every conflict,
The hardest trial in the first encounter.

[advancing]

[*advancing to Rom.*] My lord, vouchsafe but for
a few short moments

To give me audience.

Rom. Is it possible !

Do I not dream ? The dearest of my cares,
My only wish, the fair Hersilia comes,
And comes, ye Powers ! to seek me.

Her. Romulus,
Wilt thou not hear me then ? [*with a serious air.*

Rom. What means Hersilia ?

Her. Thou know'st such words offend me.

[*serious.*

Rom. In despite
Of all my best resolves my heart will rise
Spontaneous to my lips.

Her. If thou would'st have
Me present still, speak not in tender accents,
Nor ever say thou lov'st me.

Rom. [*aside.*] Surely yet
She hates me not—[*to her.*] I shall obey—What
would'st thou ?

Her. I come from Romulus to implore a grace.

Rom. A grace from me ! And must thou yet be
told,

That from the moment I beheld thee first,
Thou hadst dominion o'er my heart and throne ;
O'er all—forgive me—I will curb my fondness,

And

And never more transgress.

Her. [*aside.*] Be firm, Herfilia,
And urge him to receive Valeria's hand.

Rom. What would Herfilia? Speak.

Her. That Romulus
Would deign from me to accept another bride.

Rom. I?—I, Herfilia? [*with surprise.*

Her. Yes—I offer thee
My friend Valeria,

Rom. Me! [*disturbed.*

Her. Thou know'st Valeria
Deserves to share thy heart.

Rom. And dost thou thus,
Ingrate, insult my love? Does then my faith,
My candid truth and constancy deserve
This recompense? And canst thou, cruel, thus
Distract a heart that bears thy image grav'd;
Where, cruel as thou art, thou still shalt reign?

Her. [*aside.*] Ye rigid Sabine laws! support me
still.

Rom. Give me another bride! Almighty Powers!
Could not thy cold indifference then suffice?
To heap contempt and anguish on the man
Who lives not but in thee!

Her. [*aside.*] My breaking heart!

Rom. Infensate as I was! I fondly deem'd
My love return'd by thine: those broken accents,
Those

Those changing looks, involuntary tears,
That seem'd to speak some passion ill conceal'd ;
And these, Herfilia, were deception all ! [*tenderly.*

Her. Ah ! these were no deception. [*tenderly.*

Rom. How, Herfilia !

And was I not deceiv'd ? [*with pleasing surprise.*

Her. [*aside.*] Eternal Powers !

What have I said ?

Rom. Thou treasure of my soul !

[*with warmth of affection.*

Is it then true ? And have I then thy love ?

Her. O ! hold——nor triumph o'er Herfilia's
weakness.

Rom. But could'st thou, loving Romulus, pro-
pose

To him another bride ?

Her. O ! Heavenly Powers !

No more distract me—Could'st thou read my heart,
Ah ! didst thou know how much it felt to make
The harsh proposal, (unavailing effort
Of tyrant duty !) which to thee appear'd
A woman's cruel insult : should I tell thee
What dreadful conflict of contending passions
Has rent my soul—Ah ! Romulus, 'twould raise
Thy pity and thy wonder.

Rom. Rather say

My tenderness and love. What mortal ever
Was blest like me ? The ador'd Herfilia's mine !

Behold

Behold the star to blefs my growing empire !

O ! happy Rome !

Her. Alas ! it cannot be.

Vain is that hope—a hope that muft deceive thee :
I never can be thine.

Rom. Not mine, Herfilia !

Say, what forbids it now ?

Her. I am a daughter.

Let this fuffice ; by thee fubdued,

My rigour now is o'er :

By thee my inmoft heart is view'd ;

But ah ! exact no more.

Still conftant fhall my foul remain

Her duty to fulfil ;

Though every effort prov'd in vain

Her weaknefs to conceal.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E XI.

ROMULUS alone.

Ah ! Romulus, no longer doubt thy triumph ;

Thou haft conquer'd all Herfilia's rigid coldnefs :

Her father fhall forget his enmity,

And yield at length confent. Entreaties, offers,

With every 'vantage ; nothing fhall be left

Untried to gain her.

SCENE

S C E N E XII.

Enter HOSTILIUS hastily.

Hofl. Romulus, to arms !

Rom. What means Hostilius, ha !

Hofl. Rome is in danger.

Acrontes, mindless of thy generous treatment,
Had scarcely gain'd his freedom when he threaten'd,
With all his force conjoin'd, to assail the city.

Rom. What force is his ?

Hofl. His Ceninenfian bands.

All these in ambush did he hold prepar'd
In various quarters : at his signal given
I saw the neighbouring country fill'd with arms ;
A thousand unexpected weapons blaze,
And open'd banners streaming to the wind.

Rom. The insensate thinks to find us unprepar'd :
His punishment shall teach him other thoughts.

[going.

Hofl. I at thy side—— *[preparing to follow.*

Rom. No : here remain, Hostilius :
Rome I intrust to thee. Defend thy country ;
Defend Hersilia : who can tell what next
The traitor may attempt ? Some secret guile,
As yet to act, perhaps remains behind.

Go,

Go, but delay not.

Hof. On my faith repose.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E XIII.

ROMULUS *alone.*

All thanks to thee, O God of arms ! to thee,
Mother of mighty Love ! from whom my blood
Derives its deathless source. My happiness
Is all your gift, and yours the noble warmth
That now my bosom feels : in every trial
Be near me still, and let your favouring presence
For me still open every path to fame.

Amidst the toils of arms I go

A double wreath to find ;

And with the amorous myrtle show

The martial laurel twin'd.

A victor and a lover blest,

Shall I returning home,

With either conquest proudly grac'd,

Triumphant enter Rome.

[*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

A C T III. S C E N E I.

A wild part of the Palatine gardens, amongst high craggy rocks, watered by a falling stream, and shaded with a number of thick trees.

Enter CURTIUS in haste.

Where shall I find her? Let me not neglect
The prosperous moment Fortune offers now—
Behold she comes.

S C E N E II.

Enter HERSILIA.

My dearest daughter, thanks
To all the Gods! at length we may depart;
The time is now arriv'd.

Her. Alas! you know not
A dreadful battle rages now between
The Romans and the Ceninenfian bands
Behind the Palatine: the quarter there
Is throng'd with arms and men, and every way
Barr'd from access to reach the Sabine land.

Cur. Not all are barr'd.

Her. Yes, doubt it not, my father:

VOL. III.

A A

I from

I from my lofty dwelling view'd beneath
The furious combatants ; and from the fight
With terror flying——

Cur. What thy fear has form'd
An obstacle to our intended flight,
But makes it easier. Rome, in tumult now,
Pours all her numbers to the threaten'd hill,
While, on the other side, Tarpeia's rock
Is left deserted. Well thou know'st the Tiber
Runs at its foot : while on the side oppos'd
The combat still continues, we on this
May pass the stream : the further bank presents
Etruria's friendly land ; securely thence
We to our native country may return.

Her. Behold me ready to attend your steps.

Cur. No : here I leave with thee a trusty guide ;
With him depart. My followers, now conceal'd,
Collected first, I'll join thee on the way :
Nought can remain to frustrate our designs.
Behold the sun is reddening in the west :
We, unobserv'd, may safely go from Rome ;
And where the river bathes Carmenta's gate
A bark will then expect us.

Her. [*aside.*] Cruel parting !

Cur. Thou tremblest still—fear not, confide in
me ;
I've weigh'd it all, Hersilia, and remov'd
Whate'er

Whate'er might thwart our purpose : calm once
more

Thy troubled bosom : liberty is near.

He breathes again, who sees once more

The long'd-for port he left before ;

Who ne'er again to view the shore

Had hop'd his wish'd return.

When past the gloom of dreary night,

We deem, an object dear to sight,

The early beam of dawning light,

That tells the approach of morn. [Exit.

S C E N E III.

HERSILIA *alone*.

O ! Tiber ! Rome ! and O ! delightful shores
On which I breath'd my earliest sighs of love,
I now forsake you ; but with you I leave
My heart's far dearer part ! How oft your name
Will to my lips return ! How oft my thoughts
Haunt the dear paths of those frequented hills !
Unblest Hersilia ! never was a state,
A destiny so cruel—Yes, I know
The soul of Romulus ; and he, like him
To whom all, all he hop'd has Heaven denied,
Must feel an anguish that surpasses mine.
—Could I, ere yet I go, at least but learn—

S C E N E IV.

Enter VALERIA.

Valéria, tell me—if thou know’st—O ! tell me
The fortune of the fight ; nor let me longer
Remain in anxious doubt.

Val. The fight is ended.

Her. And who has conquer’d ?

Val. Romulus had first
Obtain’d the palm.

Her. But now ?

Val. ’Tis yet unknown
Whose brows the last decisive wreath will crown.

Her. Alas ! what means Valeria ?

Val. Patient hear,
Thou shalt know all.

Her. Speak then.

Val. The battle’s fate
Seem’d near determin’d, and on every side
The foes, with broken ranks, no longer fac’d
The Roman swords : a thousand signs declar’d
Their courage lost ; and falling, as they fled
They crush’d each other with promiscuous slaughter ;

When fierce Acrontes, bearing in his looks
The rage of furies, ’midst the wounded steeds

And

And gasping warriors, breaking through the tide
Of fugitives, and trampling under foot
The dead and dying, clear'd his desperate way,
And call'd from far on Romulus by name ;
Then join'd him soon, and with insensate boldness
Defied the victor to a single trial.

Her. O ! rashness !—What ensued ?

Val. Our hero then
Disdaining all advantage, with a glance
Bade every warrior cease to wield his arms.
The battle paus'd ; an ample space was left :
Alone, with look sedate, he then advanc'd
To meet the foe and answer to his challenge.

Her. What follow'd then ?

Val. Of that I know not yet.
When he, from whom I learn'd what I've imparted,
Had left the field the victory was doubtful.

S C E N E V.

Enter HOSTILIUS.

Host. 'Tis so no longer—Romulus has conquer'd.

Her. Is it then true ?

Host. Thyself shalt soon behold
The first rich trophies, borne by solemn vow,
In triumph offer'd to the king of Gods.

Val. The trophies !—Heaven ! Acrontes then—

Host.

Hofl. By proof

Acrontes fhew'd how blinded rage muft yield
To art and valour. All-athirft for blood,
He ftruck at random, heedlefs of defence,
While Romulus flood wifely on his guard,
And let the madman wafte his ftrength in vain.
When now he faw him panting, and perceiv'd
His blows lefs fierce and frequent, clofe he prefs'd
Th' enfeebled foe ; who yielding to the fhock,
Retreated flowly, trembled, reel'd and fell ;
And falling, loft his fword : to him ferene
The victor hafted, rais'd him from the ground,
And gave him back his weapon.

Her. Generous prince !

Hofl. And foon forgetting enmity, he thought
To clasp him to his bofom, when he faw
At him Acrontes aim a treacherous blow :
Then rous'd to wrath, all terrible he rufh'd
Upon the traitor, drove the conquering fteel,
As yet unfain'd with his perfidious blood,
Deep through his breaft, and lifelefs left the foe.

Val. O ! help me or I faint ! [*sinks down.*

Her. Valeria, now

Exert thy fortitude—A ftroke like this—
—O Heaven ! my father waits me. [*afide.*] Thou,

Hoftilius,

Watch o'er a haplefs maiden. Give, my friend,
From thee another proof of generous love :
This pious office well becomes Hoftilius.

The

The gush of sudden grief forgive,
Since love to thee is known :
Nor let the fair unpitied live
For sorrows like thy own.

If she must ever hope in vain
To see her peace return ;
Yet let her now at least obtain
The liberty to mourn.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E VI.

VALERIA, HOSTILIUS.

Hof. Ador'd Valeria ! suffer me to own
I envy him his fate, who thus receives
The glorious tribute of such precious tears.

Val. Hostilius, go : too much I feel my shame
To view in thee such witness of my weakness.

Hof. Thy will to me is law ; but know, Valeria,
I blame not thy distress, and should I speak
My secret soul, perhaps a firmer heart
Would charm me less, than softness such as thine.

Amidst those pearly drops of woe
That trickling down thy features flow,
Through which thine eyes more lovely show
Thy

Thy tender heart appears.
The charms of that enchanting face,
Where pity blends a softening grace,
More powerful seem in tears, [Exit.

S C E N E VII.

VALERIA *alone.*

Whom dost thou mourn, Valeria? Ah! this
grief
Makes thee partaker in another's guilt. [rises.
Call, call to mind the errors of Acrontes,
And call to mind thy wrongs—Awake thy virtue;
Forget an impious—O ye Powers! to shed
Oblivion o'er a passion long indulg'd,
Demands full many a pang of lingering sorrow!

One instant may the affections bind
In love's resistless power;
But not one instant can the mind
To liberty restore.

The bird, though 'scap'd the vicious snare,
The clammy juice retains:
So feeble Virtue long will wear
Her customary chains. [Exit.

SCENE

S C E N E VIII.

A spacious part at the foot of the Palatine hill, decorated for the nuptials with the Sabine dames. A magnificent flight of steps ascending to the palace of ROMULUS, situated on the hill.

A numerous crowd of people assembled to welcome the return of the victor. ROMULUS enters crowned with laurel, preceded by the Lictors and the Sabine prisoners, with the trophies of slain ACRONTES, followed by his victorious army.

CHORUS.

Our hero's glory to sustain,
Ye Gods! your favour shew:
O! teach him every art to reign,
And triumph o'er the foe.

Still thrive the laurel that may frame
The wreaths his brow shall wear,
And ever his victorious name
Let earth and seas declare.

Rom. O Rome! in conquest learn to read
The future will of Fate;
What honour'd paths thy sons may lead
To exalt the Roman state.

If

If some the foul with knowledge fire ;
 To stars their titles give ;
 Bid figur'd bronze with life respire,
 And sculptur'd marble live :

For thee by friendly Fate design'd
 Shall Tiber laws proclaim,
 To exalt the lowly of mankind,
 And haughty nations tame. .

CHORUS,

Our hero's glory to sustain,
 Ye Gods ! your favour shew ;
 O ! teach him every art to reign
 And triumph o'er the foe,

Rom. O ! Rome, in conquering, learn to read
 The future will of Fate——

S C E N E IX.

Enter VALERIA in haste.

Val. O ! help, my gracious lord ! thy prefence
 now

Is needful to us——we have foes in Rome.

Rom. Ha ! foes in Rome ?

Val. Alas ! 'tis true.

Rom. Say, where ?

Val. Towards Carmentas' gate are all in arms :

Some thither run, while some with terror fly ;
And every moment wider spreads the tumult.

Rom. Follow me, Romans.

S C E N E X.

Enter HOSTILIUS.

Host. All is now at peace,
Reserve your valour for a nobler cause.

[*to Rom.*

Rom. What cause——

Host. Would'st thou believe it, Romulus ?
One has but now been found to make the attempt
To bear Hersilia hence.

Rom. But how, enclos'd
Within the city, could the ravisher
E'er hope to escape ?

Host. Already had he brib'd
The guards that watch'd the gates, but could not
thus

Deceive my vigilance ; my charge was given
The centinels should take their post by turns ;
And hence they never long remain'd the same.
The traitor, coming with Hersilia, found
The pass defended, which he strove to force.
His followers all, though fiercely bent on conquest,

Were slain, and he himself remain'd a prisoner.

Val

Val. O! wondrous daring!

Rom. And Hersilia then——

Hofst. Hersilia panting then and wild with
terror——

S C E N E XI.

Enter HERSILIA.

Her. Ah! Romulus, have pity—mercy! pardon!
[*goes to kneel to Rom.*

Rom. O! princess, rise [*prevents her.*] What
would'st thou? Calm thy terror,

Thou art now in safety here.

Her. Preserve my father :
Preserve him from the soldier's insolence ;
Preserve him from the people's rage.

Rom. Thy father?

Hofst. O! Heaven! was he who held thy hand,
whose valour

I mark'd with wonder in the fight, was he——

Her. He is my father.

Rom. Say Hostilius, then
What has befallen him?

Hofst. He remains a prisoner.
I deem'd it prudent to secure in him
The means of more discovery; while his aspect
And valour claim'd respect

Rom. But where is now
The prince dispos'd?

Hofst.

Hof. I left him 'midst the guard.

Rom. Conduct him instant hither.

Hof. See—he's here.

SCENE LAST.

Enter CURTIUS guarded.

Rom. O ! valiant prince ! and must our enmity
For ever last ? Shall daily cause of strife
Divide too warlike nations, form'd by Heaven
To rule the subject world ? Here end at length
Our mutual hatred. To its place restor'd,
Return thy honour'd weapon : thou art free,
For Romulus has now no claim on Curtius.

Cur. [*aside.*] What unexpected words are these
I hear ?

Rom. Thou answer'st not, O ! prince !

Her. [*aside.*] Alas ! my father
Remains implacable.

Rom. Ah ! since thy power,
With such a gift as Heaven on thee bestow'd,
Can happiness confer ; neglect not now
The blest occasion. Should'st thou grant to me
Hersilia's hand, what treasure would be mine,
Mine by thy goodness ! Ask me then whate'er
A grateful heart can pay : thyself prescribe
The laws to bind our friendship ; Curtius, then
Direct my future fate.

Cur. [*aside.*] O ! mighty Gods !
Why was not Romulus a Sabine born ?

Her. [*aside.*] Alas ! he still is silent.

Rom. Speak, Hersilia.

Her. O ! Heaven ! What can I say ? I am a
daughter ;
I know my father's will, and this to obey
I need not tell thee is my first of duties.

Rom. My fate is then decided ; since no less
His silence, than thy speech, declares his purpose.

Ah ! Curtius ! every hope I see is vain
To shake thy constancy. Though nought avails
To conquer Curtius, still to me remains
The conquest o'er myself. Go hence in freedom,
And bear thy daughter to her native land.

Cur. And dost thou then restore Hersilia to
me ?

Rom. I do.

Cur. O Gods !

Rom. A lover and lov'd,
A conqueror, I restore her to thy arms.

Cur. [*aside.*] O ! virtue more than human !

Rom. O ! farewell ! [to Her.]
Farewell my only joy ! Heaven still preserve
thee

Thy sex's pride, thy noble father's honour,

My

My foul's fond worship and the world's example.

Her. [*aside.*] Support me, Heaven !

Cur. [*aside.*] And who can hate this Roman ?

Rom. Yet speak, O ! prince, at least vouchsafe
a look

Ere yet we part ; and since thou wilt not own
A father's name, yet deign to part a friend,
And let our former enmity subside.

Cur. Enough, enough, my son, Hersilia's
thine ;

Thou hast conquer'd.

Rom. Do I dream ?

Her. Can this be true ?

Cur. I have not in this bosom, O ! my children,
A heart of flint. Who loves not Romulus
That knows his virtues ? Love him, my Hersilia,
I love him too, adore him, and am thankful
To Heaven that sav'd me for so blest a day.

Rom. O ! happy Rome !

Her. My father and my husband !

CHORUS.

Ye Gods ! whose power directs below
Th' events of mortal men ;
By whom their fortunes mingled flow,
The cloudy and serene.

Propitious

Propitious days by you be given
To blefs this faithful pair ;
Since nuptial chains for thefe in Heaven
Were fram'd beneath your care.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

THE DISCOVERY OF JOSEPH:

A

SACRED DRAMA.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

JOSEPH.

BENJAMIN,
JUDAH,
SIMEON, } his Brethren.

ASENETHA, Wife to JOSEPH.

THANETES, Confidant of JOSEPH.

CHORUS of JACOB'S SONS.

SCENE, MEMPHIS.

THE DISCOVERY OF JOSEPH.

PART THE FIRST.

JOSEPH, THANETES.

Jof. None of the Hebrew brethren yet return'd ?

Than. None yet, my lord.

Jof. Haft thou difpatch'd, t^o explore
The public ways ?

Than I have ; but fent in vain
Full many a meffenger.

Jof. Yet not fo far
Is Mambre's valley from thefe regal walls,
But fince they parted hence, their tardy feet
Might long ere this have meafur'd back the
way.

Than. Forgive me, if I know not what to think
Of fuch concern : a few poor fimple fhepherds
Appear an object far beneath your care.

Jof. [*afide.*] Thanetes little thinks thefe fimple
fhepherds

Are

Are Joseph's brethren—[*to him.*]
—I'm offended,
friend,

To find myself deceiv'd : to these I gave
In charge to bring with them, at their return,
Young Benjamin, old Jacob's latest born.
Thou heard'st with what unwilling lips they
vow'd

To do my bidding.

Than. But your wisdom well
Secur'd compliance, by detaining one
A hostage for their faith : if this should fail,
The force of famine must again compel
These Hebrews back. The barren provinces
Yield not sufficient nurture to sustain
The pale inhabitants : the blighted corn
Dies in the blade, or shoots not from the foil.
The feeble shepherd mourns his lessening flock,
The famish'd cattle chew the unfavoury stubble
Unmeet for nourishment : the husbandman,
With trembling feet, each field explores in vain
For life-sustaining food ; while Memphis only
(Such thanks to you we owe) abounds with
plenty

Of well-stor'd harvest, and the afflicted world
To fly from famine, all repair to Egypt.

Jof. If Benjamin, a victim to the rage
Of envious brethren, should no longer live,
What hopes to see him here ?

Than. And whence, my lord,

Can

Can such suspicions rise within your breast ?

Jos. The boy was Jacob's hope.

Than. What then ? ✕

Jos. Myself,
Myself, like him, have known the calumny,
The treacherous wiles of deep fraternal envy.—
O ! powerful King of Heaven ! protect and save
him.

Than. What means this tendernefs for one unknown ?

Jos. My life with Benjamin's is nearly pair'd,
His fortune bids me recollect my own,

By nature to compassion mov'd,
We feel the griefs of those,
Whose hapless destiny has prov'd
The touch of kindred woes.

A sympathy the heart constrains
To pity the distress ;
When, by our own, we judge the pains
That rend another's breast.

Than. And this, shall this suffice to make you
wretched !

Alas ! how true, that here on earth is found
No perfect happiness : for if to pass
From life's worst evils to the highest rank
Of human honours, be indeed a blessing,
Who should like you rejoice ? A slave, a stranger

You came to Memphis ; slander'd by a base
 Unhallow'd tongue and bound in cruel chains,
 Your life was forfeited, when righteous Heaven
 Declar'd itself for Joseph : future time
 Was open'd to your view : to one your words
 Greatness prefag'd, to one they menac'd death.
 All Memphis heard your prophecies : the king
 Perplex'd recurr'd to you ; your wisdom solv'd
 His anxious doubts ; disclos'd the impending evils,
 And shew'd the remedies : th' event declar'd
 Your counsels just. Behold you now remov'd
 From prison to the palace ; see your fetters
 Exchang'd for glittering gems and costly robes,
 Sublimely seated on the regal car,
 You pass those ways, which once your feet had
 trod

A shackled prisoner ; hear your name proclaim'd
 The SAVIOUR OF MANKIND. Now minister
 Of king and people, ripe with blooming honours,
 Rich in a beauteous offspring, blest by all
 The grateful world, and highly lov'd of Heaven,
 It seems that nought is wanting to your wishes ;
 And yet amidst this unexampled flow
 Of earthly blessings, your inventive mind
 Can for itself create unthought-of evils.

Did every outward feature show
 The inward pangs of secret woe,
 How oft would those our pity know,
 That now our envy move.

'Twould

'Twould then be seen, in many a breast,
What cruel foes their peace molest ;
And those, who seem to us so blest,
As wretched then would prove.

Jof. Thanetes, go—Afenetha approaches.
Forget not my command : if Jacob's sons,
If Benjamin should come, return with speed
To welcome their arrival.

Than. I obey.
My gracious lord, henceforth be to yourself
What you are still to others ; every comfort
You give to them, but to yourself distress,
You heal another's pains, but feed your own.

ASENETHA, JOSEPH.

Afen. My confort, is Afenetha permitted
To ask a boon.

Jof. The doubt, my love, offends me.

Afen. Release the Hebrew prisoner from his
bonds.

Jof. Simeon ?

Afen. The same.

Jof. But what excites thy pity
For one thou know'st not ?

Afen. And what rigour, say,
Has mov'd you to the punishment of one,
Who ne'er to you was guilty ?

Jof.

Jof. And how know'st thou
That he is innocent ?

Afen. His crime I see not :
His punishment is present to my sight.

Jof. And is it less a crime because unknown ?

Afen. But yet it merits sure, forgive me Joseph,
A judge more merciful.

Jof. But not unjust.

Afen. Alas ! my lord, without the touch of
pity,
Justice were cruelty.

Jof. And but for justice,
Pity were weakness.

Afen. Let us imitate
The CAUSE of ALL, who sheds his kindly rain
Alike on good and wicked : equal HE
Wills that his blessed sun should shine on both.

Jof. Who seeks to be like him, sometimes must
scourge,
For their correction, those whom most he loves.

Afen. But what you feel for Simeon, pardon
fir,
By outward signs more hatred seems than love.

Jof. Condemn me not too soon. How apt is
man
To judge of others harshly ! Wretched fruit
Of blind self-love ! The blame we cast on others
Is flattery to our pride : we seem to gain

That

That which we take from them ; and ever seek
To find companions of our faults in others,
Or faults which we have not ; and hence it comes
We change the names of things : fear, in our-
selves,

Is prudence call'd, and meanness, modesty.
But seen in others, modesty is meanness,
And prudence fear. 'Tis hence we ever prove
So partial to ourselves ; and hence it comes
With flow belief we join the voice of praise,
While censure ever finds our open ear.

Ah ! still with hasty judgment fear
To view another's deed ;
For what may cruelty appear,
From mercy may proceed.

More cautious weigh whate'er can move
Your thoughts to vain surmise :
As cruelty may mercy prove,
So mercy may chastise.

Asen. If you refuse to set the prisoner free,
At least consent to hear him : this, my lord,
You will not sure deny.

Jos. I grant thy suit :
Bring Simeon hither. [*to a servant*] Little does
she know

The secret treason once employ'd against me ;
That Simeon is my brother and my foe. [*aside.*

Asen.

Asen. Thus by his speech, his action and his
looks

You may divine his innocence or guilt.

Jos. Fallacious signs, Asenetha, are these.
'Tis not for us to penetrate the secrets
That lurk within the heart : the mortal sight
Views but the outward semblance : God alone
Beholds the soul of man.

Asen. But oft the soul
That actuates life, impresses on the body
Such strong emotions, that the passions lie
Unveil'd, and looks and gestures speak the man.

Each tree will by its aspect show
Whate'er defect is hid below :
By leaf and fruit and flower we know
What from the eye the root conceals.
In vain the face may features wear
To veil the mind's corroding care ;
While borrow'd smiles would peace declare,
A look the war within reveals.

JOSEPH, ASENETHA, SIMEON.

Jos. See, Simeon comes—[*aside.*] O ! could he
but divine.

That Joseph lives in me—Eternal Justice !
Behold him in my power ; behold him bound,
Bound in a brother's chains whose life he fought !

—Shepherd, draw near.

Sim. Thus prostrate, mighty lord,
Thus humbly at your feet——

Jof. Rife.

Sim. [*aside.*] Sure that voice—
What means that likeness? Wherefore do I trem-
ble?

Why have I lost all courage?

Afen. Speak.

Sim. I dare not :
I feel, I feel in presence of your lord
A sudden coldness freezing at my heart.

Jof. [*aside.*] Remorse has touch'd him, yet he
knows not why.

Jof. Shepherd, thy name——

Sim. Thou know'st it well—'tis Simeon.

Jof. Thy country?

Sim. Carra.

Jof. And thy father?

Sim. Jacob.

Jof. Thy mother?

Sim. Leah.

Jof. Who are those that came
With thee companions at thy first arrival?

Sim. My brethren.

Jof. Was not Jacob then a father

To

To more than these ?

Sim. Alas ! alas ! he was :

The beauteous Rachael bore him other sons.

Jof. Their names were ? Say.

Sim. Joseph and Benjamin.

Jof. Why came not these with thee ?

Sim. The youngest stay'd
To cheer his aged father.

Jof. And the elder ?

Sim. O ! powerful God !—the elder—

Jof. Speak—what follows ?

Sim. I know not what befel——

Jof. [*aside.*] But well I know.

Asen. [*aside.*] The colour leaves his cheek.

Jof. Tell me at least—

Does Joseph live ?

Sim. His father mourns his death.

Jof. Is he then dead ?

Sim. To us his fate's unknown.

Jof. Thy words but ill agree.

Sim. Yet truly spoken.

Jof. But what was Joseph's fortune ?

Sim. Mighty lord,
Speak not of Joseph more—his name alone
Is tenfold anguish to the heart of Simeon.

Jof.

Jos. What crime has he committed ?

Sim. None—O ! none.

Jos. Perhaps, ungrateful to a tender father,
False to his brethren's love, with impious guile
He fought your lives, and merits now your hatred.

Sim. O ! he was innocent, was just to all—
Ah ! fir, what have you ask'd ? How wak'd re-
membrance

To dreadful images ! Dismiss me hence ;
For pity's sake dismiss me to my dungeon :
You know not how you rack me—O ! that look
Has wither'd all my strength, and every question
Infixes in my breast a thousand stings.

O ! mighty God ! I now behold
The tears that down his features roll'd ;
The tears of innocence and truth.
I hear his sighs, I hear him mourn,
Thus from a fire's embraces torn,
In all the bloom of early youth.

Jos. [*aside.*] My soul is mov'd !—O ! let me
now, to give
His sorrows ease, reveal the brother—no—
Time is not yet mature—[*to him*] Thy doubtful
words
Increase my first suspicions ; while to this
Thy brethren's long delay—

JOSEPH,

JOSEPH, ASENETHA, SIMEON, THANETES.

Than. His brethren, fir,
Are now arriv'd.

Jof. And Benjamin ?

Than. Behold him ;
Observe that stripling who with tardy steps
Now lags behind the rest.

Jof. [*looking out.*] O ! powerful nature !
How do I trace in him a mother's likeness ! [*aside.*
—Thanetes, go ; prepare the friendly banquet :
Let Simeon be releas'd from bonds, and you,
Ye shepherds, now draw near—[*aside.*] Betray me
not,
My yearning heart !

JOSEPH, ASENETHA, SIMEON, THANETES, JU-
DAH, BENJAMIN, *and the rest of JOSEPH's*
brethren.

Judah. Our promise, mighty lord,
Behold fulfill'd : behold us once again
Thus prostrate at your feet : then cast aside
Your former doubts, and now vouchsafe to take,
With every zealous vow of grateful homage,
These presents offer'd here.

Jof. What presents ? Say.

Judah.

Judah. Accept our humble tribute here,
The balm of many an odorous tear
 Distilling from the Arabian tree :
The liquor sweet, as crystal clear,
 The produce of the labouring bee.
In gifts like these no wealth is shown ;
But what we give we boast our own,
 The fruits of simple industry.

Jos. I take your offer'd presents : rise, my
 friends,
Say, is your father well ? The hoary Jacob
Of whom ye spake, say does the good man live ?

Judah. He lives, your servant lives, but bow'd
 beneath
The weight of years.

Jos. And Benjamin, the youth
Of whom ye spake ?

Judah. Behold him here.

Jos. My son——

[*aside.*] O ! how his sight alone affects my
 soul !

[*to him.*] Heaven ! O my son, be watchful o'er
 thy days,

And keep thee still.—[*aside.*] O God ! what sudden
 tumult

Of bursting passion ! [*to him*] Still, my son, pre-
 serve——

[*aside.*]

[*aside.*] My eyes o'erflow with tears—I can no longer

Restrain their course—O ! let me seek elsewhere
To hide me from their presence.

[*retires with* Thanetes.

JUDAH, SIMEON, BENJAMIN, *and the rest of the
brethren.*

Benj. Does he then
Abruptly leave us thus ?

Judah. I know not, brethren,
What mean those broken accents.

Sim. Ah ! too surely
He has till now conceal'd, beneath the veil
Of placid looks, the anger in his bosom.

Judah. Who knows for us what Fate has next
prepar'd ?

Benj. Whither, my brethren, would you lead
me now ?

Sim. We merit all we feel : for Joseph's suffer-
ings
The Almighty now pursues us : prayers and tears
Alas ! avail'd not him.

Judah. In vain I urg'd,
Touch not the guiltless youth, and lo ! from us
His blood is now requir'd.

JUDAH,

JUDAH, SIMEON, BENJAMIN, *the rest of*
JOSEPH'S *brethren*, THANETES.

Than. Shepherds, my lord
Requires your presence ; he would have you share
With him the social banquet.

Sim. Ah ! some snare
Is surely laid for our unhappy lives.

Benj. O ! what a day is this !

Judah. O ! fatal banquet !

Than. Why loiter thus ? Come shepherds, let
us go.

JUDAH, SIMEON, BENJAMIN, *and the rest of*
JOSEPH'S *brethren*.

All. Great GOD of Israel ! hear ; defend thy
people.

CHORUS.

Great GOD of Abraham ! we confess our guilt,
But we are still thy people : deal not then
Thy judgments strictly ; for before thy sight
What living soul shall e'er be justify'd ?
And whither, whither shall we fly to shun
A GOD incens'd but to a gracious GOD ?
Our hopes, our fears, on thee alike depend,
On thee our Judge, our Father and our Friend !

END OF THE FIRST PART.

PART THE SECOND,

JOSEPH, THANETES.

Jof. Haft thou observ'd my bidding ?*Than.* All is done.

From me the Hebrew brethren have receiv'd
The corn thou gav'st in charge, and in the portion
Consign'd to Benjamin I have conceal'd
The silver chalice, us'd by thee at banquets
And solemn auguries ; and this to them
Unknown, the shepherds are with joy departed :
But from amongst thy menials one at distance
Pursued their steps ; and scarce they shall have
pass'd

The city's gates, when he will seize and question
Of their imputed theft, and then conduct them
As criminals before thee.

Jof. As I bade,
Thou duly hast discharg'd—but whence the
wonder
Thy looks declare ?

Than. Who would not, gracious lord,
But marvel at the strange discordant passions,
Which I have mark'd in you ? I've seen you lost
In tender feelings and inflam'd with anger,

All

All in the self-same moment. As a friend
You welcome Jacob's sons, and then confus'd
Abruptly leave them : to the festive banquet
You bid them guests, and then with secret snares
Would seem to seek their ruin. Benjamin
You have distinguish'd by a thousand tokens
Of tendernefs and love ; and yet on him
Would fix'd the proof of this imagin'd crime.

Jof. 'Tis not permitted thee, Thanetes, yet
To fathom Joseph's thoughts. Go, bring once
more

These shepherds to my sight. Without enquiry
To know my counfels, blindly thou obey
My will unquestion'd, tho' obscure ; nor think
On thee my laws too rigidly impos'd.
Each man, by focial compact, must be fubject
To powers fuperior : these degrees are fram'd
By God's high ordinance, and he whose will
Refists his mightier's will, refists his God.

Than. My zeal would not be rash, but when
permitted
Would humbly fpeak, or filently obey.
Thy laws I honour, nor am yet to learn
What duties fuit the ftation of Thanetes.

The fervant ill his lord obeys,
And forfeits all a fervant's praise,
Who each command prefuming weighs,
And first approves or blames.

He flights th' eternal laws that bind
 The various stations of mankind,
 Who, mindless of his place assign'd,
 Himself a judge proclaims.

JOSEPH *alone.*

O ! thou ETERNAL TRUTH ! who read'st the
 secrets
 Of every heart, thou know'st if e'er I cherish'd
 Against my brethren aught of fell revenge.
 Almighty Power ! for ever from my breast
 Avert such dire design, which still returns
 To plague its author ; which employ'd on those
 Above our strength, is folly ; on our equals,
 At least is dangerous : and on those beneath us,
 Is abject tyranny. The feign'd resentment
 My features wore, fought only from my brethren
 Repentance for the past : I only wish'd
 To set before them all the dreadful sufferings,
 To which the wicked tend, that thus the fear
 Of just reproach awaiting on guilty deeds,
 Might henceforth teach them to abhor the crime.

A mother such resentment wears,
 Soft pity in her eyes ;
 Each moment threats, but still forbears
 Her darling to chastise.

She

She lifts her hand, but lifts in vain,
For ere her hand descends,
In act to strike, her love restrains,
And love the stroke suspends.

JOSEPH, ASENETHA.

Asen. Alas! my lord, too truly have you
spoken ;
I now reproach my own too easy faith.

Jof. What since has chanc'd ?

Asen. 'Tis now a time for rigour.
Thy guests ungrateful, who but late have left us,
By fraud contriv'd to steal the sacred chalice
Employ'd by thee to read events to come.

Jof. What says Asenetha ?

Asen. I speak but truth.
When by thy menials seiz'd, they firmly first
Denied the charge. "Let him, whoe'er is guilty,
Let him (they cry'd) be punish'd, let him die ;
And let the rest remain in Egypt slaves."
Thy ministers pursued their search, and found
The unworthy theft conceal'd amid't the corn
Consign'd to Benjamin. The brethren then
Lost all their courage : breathless, pale and silent,
Without defence, they all with one accord
Their vestures rent and wept in floods of anguish.

Jof. Perhaps they are not guilty.

Asen.

Asen. Do my words
Deserve so little faith ?

Jos. It was but now
You thought them innocent, and now affirm
That you were then deceiv'd. Who knows but
soon

You may, *Asenetha*, repeat the same,
And call your present thought a new deception.

Asen. Forgive me, comfort, sure your frequent
doubts
Are carried to the extreme.

Jos. And yet we never
Exert sufficient caution : outward objects
Are known but dimly by the soul, enclos'd
“ Within this wall of flesh.” Our partial know-
ledge

The senses give, fallacious ministers !
For these are ever subject to mistake :
Yet, on their faith, we pardon or condemn
With doubtful judgment.

Asen. Ever must the soul
Remain uncertain of the truth ; and live
Blind in her state of darkness ?

Jos. Yes, in vain
We hope for light, unless in HIM we seek it,
The sole, immutable, eternal fount
Of light eternal ! HIM the first, the greatest,
The cause of every cause : in whom alone

We

We move and live ; who centers in himself
Whate'er is good ; light, spirit, peace and justice,
And wisdom infinite, and truth and life !

Asen. What heavenly splendor lightens in thy
features !

While, as thou speak'st, thine accents strike my
sense

With more than mortal sounds ! I shake with awe
To hear thy voice, and while thy soul seems rapt
To God's high presence, here I lag below
And feel the clog of this " sin-tainted mold."

As lost in gloomy woods I stray,
I view beside me pale Dismay,
Nor know what path must yet be tried.
O! thou, my sun, reveal thy light ;
For who but thee can lead me right,
My faithful counsellor and guide?

JOSEPH, ASENETHA, THANETES, JUDAH, SIMEON,
BENJAMIN, *and the rest of JOSEPH's brethren.*

Than. Behold the criminals.

Asen. See where they lie,
Stretch'd humbly at thy feet.

Than. And not a tongue
Dares break the solemn silence.

Jos. Thoughtless men,

What

What have ye done? Insensate! not to know
My skill in divination.

Judah. Mighty lord,
How shall we answer? What can words avail?
What plead in our behalf? Th' Eternal Power
Too well remembers now our past offences—
This day exacts the forfeit.—Mighty God!
I feel thy hand avenging: well I see
The secret workings of thy justice, arm'd
Against the hidden deeds of sinful man.

Behold the man with guilt oppress'd!
By day, by night he mourns;
By thee, his conscience, ne'er at rest,
With flames unceasing burns,
Till every treason in his breast
Upon himself returns.

Jos. Forbid it heaven, that Joseph e'er should
take
Such rigorous measures. No, the theft was prov'd
On Benjamin: let him alone remain
With me in servitude; and you, ye brethren,
Return in freedom to your father's presence.

Judah. How can we e'er return to Jacob's sight?

Benj. Return, return! and I alone remain
A slave in Egypt?

Jos. Only thou: the rest
This instant must depart.

Benj.

Benj. A little stay:—

Ah! Judah, tell me, Judah, is it thus
You keep your promise given? At least, my
brethren,

Refuse me not one tender last embrace.
Alas! you all depart, and leave me here
A guiltless prisoner! What will now become
Of Jacob, aged Jacob, when he learns
The fate of Benjamin his darling child?

If yet your breasts compassion know,
And feel a wretched brother's woe,
For me to mourning Jacob go,
And kiss for me a father's hand.
Tell him his child alive remains,
And still for him his love retains ——
But tell him not I live in chains,
A slave, O! Heaven, in Egypt's land!

Jof. [*aside.*] Be still my beating heart!

Judah. And is there none,
No hope to appease you?

Jof. None: the word is given
And must be now obey'd.

Judah. Hear me at least
Without resentment: hear me, gracious lord.

Jof. What canst thou say? Dispatch.

Judah. You well remember
When first I came to Memphis.

Jof.

Jos. I remember

I gave thee then in charge to bring before me
Thy brother Benjamin : thou mad'st reply,
His mourning father will not live, depriv'd
Of him, his age's hope. I answer'd then :
Think not without the child to see me more.

Judah. On this condition we return'd to Jacob.
Again he urg'd us to revisit Egypt :

“ In vain” (I cry'd) “ our journey, if the youth,
If Benjamin remain.” “ And how (he said)
Can Jacob live, depriv'd of all his sons ?

Alas ! alas ! I bore of Rachel's love

Two pledges only : one, O ! Heaven ! the first,
Was made to savage beasts a bleeding prey :

You knew it well, for you, my sons, you brought
The fatal tidings—him I saw no more !

If now this second leave me, should some chance,
Some dismal chance, o'ertake him on the way,
You hasten to the grave my hoary age.”

Meantime the famine now increas'd : what then,
What then could wretched Jacob ? If he still
Retain'd his Benjamin, he died with want ;

And should he part from Benjamin, the grief
Of such a parting kills him : “ O ! my father,”
(I thus at length) “ O ! father most lov'd !

To me intrust him : if I see thy face

Without the child, to all succeeding time

Impute to me the guilt.” He heard, believ'd.

My plighted faith. I parted and fulfill'd

Your strict command. Now hear me, gracious lord;
Thou art a father and hast been a son :
O ! for a moment to thyself transplant
Thy servant's feelings : can I stand before
My father's sight without his trusted pledge ?
Ah ! no——O ! then let Benjamin return
To forrowing Jacob ; I, and I alone,
Will here in servitude for him remain :
Ah ! rather let me suffer all, than witness
The frantic ravings of paternal sorrow.

Jos. [*aside.*] My heart is rent—I cannot bear—

Judah. Ah ! why,

Why dost thou hide thy face ? Alas ! in pity,
If not for me, yet sure a wretched father
At least may claim it——O ! my gracious lord,
Had you been present at this cruel parting !
It seem'd as if his life and darling son
At once were ravish'd from his aged breast.
“ Farewell” (he cried) and once again embrac'd
him;

Again to this, to that he recommends
The weeping innocent ; then calls on Rachel,
Then recollects his Joseph ; finds them both
Trac'd in the features of his Benjamin ;
And finds in them his every loss renew'd,
All !—all !—you weep—what means this gracious
sign ?

Our woes have touch'd your heart—O ! mighty
God ?

Improve those kindly tears.

Jos. Enough, enough—

I can no longer hold—my dearest brethren,
Know your own blood—I here abandon all
My late assum'd resentment—come, O ! come,
Come to your brother's bosom—I am Joseph.

Judah. Joseph !

Benj. Eternal God !

Sim. Ah ! wretched we,
Where shall we hide us now ?

Than. O ! strange events !

Asen. Most wonderful !

Jos. No, let not the remembrance
Of Joseph sold to bondage now afflict you :
To that event, both Egypt and yourselves
Have ow'd your preservation : to this land
God sent me first but to prepare your way.
Return, return, my brethren, to your father,
Tell him the greatness of his son, and tell him
To haste and share it with me. Silent still ?
Perhaps you yet may doubt me ? Answer, Judah.
Simeon, be comforted : draw near, my brother,
My Benjamin !

Asen. Was ever seen, Thanetes,
A spectacle like this ? Observe how all
The impatient brethren crowd around my lord,
While mingled passions strive in every face
Of fear and gladness : On his forehead one

Imprints

Imprints an eager kiss ; that, on his hand ;
This on his cheek, and that his vest, whilst he
With equal warmth would answer all their loves
And give them all himself. Their tongues can find
No words distinct, and in th' excess of joy,
Instead of words, they mingle tender tears.

How well those struggling passions show,
What language scarce reveals :
From such a silence well I know,
Whate'er the breast conceals.

A joy sincere requires not words
Its feelings to disclose ;
And little aid the tongue affords
When bliss the heart o'erflows.

Judah. O ! merciful as just !

Sim. O ! generous brother !

Benj. O ! happy Joseph !

Judah. Lo ! thy dreams are now
At length fulfill'd.

Sim. Eternal Providence !
To thee all human wisdom is but folly.
By us was Joseph sold lest future time
Should see us subject to him ; and behold
The same unfeeling act that gave him bonds,
Has brought us here to worship at his feet !

Judah. So God, the great disposer of events,
In wisdom plans, that they who most oppose,

Fulfill his secret purpose.

Jos. O ! my brethren,
 The strange vicissitudes of Joseph's life
 Must veil some secret truths. To you I came
 In love sincere, commission'd from my father ;
 You fought my death ; you sold me for a price
 To rude barbarians : then, a slave in Egypt,
 Accus'd and innocent, I bore the shame
 Without defence, and suffer'd punishment
 Due to my false accuser : plac'd between
 Two hapless criminals ; to one my lips
 Predicted death, to one a happier change.
 In friendship now with them, so late my foes,
 I minister'd the food of life to them
 Who fought my death. I heard myself proclaim'd
 THE SAVIOUR OF THE EARTH. Am I the image
 Of one far greater ? Sure some mighty work
 Is ripening now, and Joseph's life is given
 A type and shadow by mysterious Heaven,

CHORUS.

Infernal he, whose impious folly dares
 Oppose his GOD : he falls into the snares
 He laid for others, that at last enclose
 The wisest with inextricable woes,
 True Virtue, like a palm, all force defies,
 And, more oppress'd, shall still more vigorous rise.

END OF THE SECOND PART.

C A N T A T A S.

C A N T A T A S.

FISHING.

ALREADY evening shades prevail,
And hover o'er the darkening seas :
Come, Nyfa, come, with me inhale
From placid waves the freshening breeze.

Of pure delights they little know,
Who ne'er, along this shore reclin'd,
Have watch'd the peaceful waters' flow,
Light curling to the gentle wind.

Come, Nyfa, leave awhile thy calm retreat,
Leave thy favour'd rustic seat ;
For pleasure dwells not there alone,
These rocks and waves have pleasures of their
own.

Here, when the night has veil'd each eye,
In yonder sea, that seems another sky,
The innumerable stars that gild the sphere,
Bright and more bright, increasing still, appear :
And look, the moon's reflected beams
Sparkle, with broken light, amidst the briny streams.

At morn I'll found the twisted shell,
 Which not our oaten pipes excel :
 And since, alas ! my Nyfa's ear
 Disdains her lover's plaints to hear,
 I'll sing of Glauce, Doris' name,
 I'll Galatea's pains proclaim,
 And Thetis better known to fame.
 Thou, from the beach, shalt view thy harmless
 breed
 Of favourite lambs on tender herbage feed,
 And twixt the sheltering branches shun
 The fervors of a mid-day sun :
 Meantime thy hand the tapering reed may bear,
 And with insidious hook the fish insnare :
 So shall my fair in either province shine,
 To hold the rural crook, or guide the angler's line.

No more in ocean's weedy caves
 The scaly tribe remains ;
 All cut, with eager fin, the waves,
 All rush impatient to be slaves
 In lovely Nyfa's chains.

The nymphs, in crystal waters bred,
 Shall cull their precious store,
 Fair shells, and coral shining red,
 In Nyfa's lap to pour.

THE DREAM.

SINCE oft in slumber comes the fair
To footh, with kindness, every care
I suffer for her sake :
Ah ! Love, my fate with justice view ;
Make all my blisful visions true,
Or let me never wake !

Upon the margin of a lonely stream,
I fate at early morn's first purple beam,
And dream'd (though yet methought 'twas not a
dream)

I saw thee, Phyllis, at my side :
I seem'd the notes of birds to hear,
The tinkling sound of waters near,
And whispering leaves that to the wind replied.
Then gazing on those lovely eyes,
I soon perceiv'd the wonted tumults rise :
My pulse beat quick ; but when my Phyllis show'd
A pity, ne'er till then bestow'd,
I fear'd, alas ! the whole might prove
An idle phantom of deluding love.

What flattering words my fair one spoke !
And from her lips what rapturous accents broke !
Ah ! how those trembling glances seem'd to
impart

The tenderest wishes of the heart.

O ! didst thou know what power those eyes can
arm,
When pity gives their beams a softer charm ;
Ah ! Phillis, never, never more
Should I thy cruelty deplore.
What then within my bosom wrought,
What then I said, what then I thought,
No tongue can tell—but this I know,
On that dear hand of living snow
A thousand kisses I bestow'd,
While on thy cheek the modest roses glow'd.
When sudden from the neighbouring
brake
I heard the rattling branches shake :
I turn'd, and turning I beheld
My rival, half from view conceal'd ;
Philenus, who with looks of jealous spite,
And envy in his soul, had mark'd my stoln de-
light.
With mingled anger and surprise,
My struggling passions seem'd to rise,
Till sleep dispell'd and all the vision past,
I found that, even in dreams, my joys could
never last !

'Tis true, that with the fleeting shades
My transient pleasures fly ;
But never, though the semblance fades,
Shall love, my Phyllis, die.

If sleep, with momentary power,
Can bliss in dreams excite ;
feel, alas ! my sorrows more,
With day's returning light.

THE NAME.

ON thee that name belov'd I write,
Inscrib'd within my breast ;
Fair laurel, Phœbus' chief delight,
By Phœbus ever blest'd !

As still thy leaves unchang'd remain,
May Chloris prove to me :
But never let my hopes be vain,
Unfruitful found like thee.

Yes, happy plant ! exalt thy stately head,
And with fresh verdure all thy branches spread ;
While, with thy trunk below,
The name ador'd shall grow.
The nymphs who dwell in limpid floods,
The nymphs, who haunt the hanging woods ;
And every Sylvan power,
In grot or tufted bower,
With one accord, shall each returning year,
To honour thee, in rustic dance appear.
To thy superior claim shall yield
The leafy tenants of the wood and field :
The knotty oak and pine shall bend to thee,
The Idumæan palm and towering Alpine tree.

No wreath, but thine, shall bind my hair ;
Shelter'd by thee, each live-long day,
I'll fit and tune my amorous lay,
And every secret of my love declare.
'Tis thou, dear plant ! alone shalt know
The grace my fair-one may bestow :
To thee her anger I'll reveal ;
Whate'er I think, whate'er I feel ;
And all my varied scenes of mingled bliss and woe.

May spring, in every charm array'd,
With constant bloom be thine ;
And stretch'd beneath thy peaceful shade,
May never faithless swain be laid,
Or cruel Nymph recline.

No bird, of unpropitious flight,
Amidst thy branches rest ;
But Philomel there only light,
To build her tuneful nest.

SPRING.

O ! HEAVEN ! Philenus, see the mead renew
 Its cheerful robe of verdant hue,
 While every gladden'd eye perceives
 The trees put forth their tender leaves ;
 And Zephyrus, with purple wing,
 Flutters amid the boughs, the harbinger of
 spring.

The genial season now, that nature warms,
 Calls thee, alas ! to camps and hostile arms ;
 How wilt thou then, distress'd Irene, give
 Thy days to grief, and how without Philenus
 live !

Ye gentle gales ! forbear to blow
 In pity of Irene's woe ;
 Nor groves so soon your verdure show
 To clothe the naked I pray.
 For every flower's reviving bloom,
 For every breeze that wafts perfume,
 What sighs my love must pay !

Ah wretch ! who first from harmless steel de-
 sign'd

A murderous weapon to destroy mankind,

And made of cruelty an art :
 Sure banish'd from that ruthless heart,
 Were soft humanity and love :
 What more than madness could his bosom
 move,
 A tender fair-one's fondness to forego,
 For the stern threatenings of a savage foe ?
 Be not deceiv'd, Philenus ; if the alarms
 Of war and tumult for thy soul have charms,
 Each lover has his wars and Love has too his
 arms.

In love must toil, through heat and cold,
 Th' experienc'd, artful and the bold :
 In love, surprizals, snares we meet ;
 Defence and skirmish and defeat ;
 Conquests and triumph in their turn :
 We smile in peace, in anger burn ;
 But anger, swiftly put to flight ;
 And peace, that ever gives delight ;
 And triumph, undistinguish'd here,
 Alike to vanquish'd and to victor dear :
 And even the pains of love—but hark ! from far
 The trumpet sounds a peal of war—
 It calls thee hence—Ingrate ! Ah ! why
 So sudden from Irene fly ?
 I seek not to disgrace thy name,
 Ah ! cruel ! small the boon I claim ;
 O ! grant me but a look, and quit me then for
 fame.

Go,

Go, best belov'd ! but still in thine

Preserve Irene's days :

Go, but return in safety mine

With all a victor's praise.

Where'er thou art, to me forlorn

Some kind remembrance give ;

And say, " My absence doom'd to mourn,

Does poor Irene live ?"

THE RETURN.

WHAT means Irene, thus to meet,
And thus return'd Philenus greet ?
Thy own Philenus, who so long believ'd
His distant exile mourn'd, is coldly thus receiv'd !
The same am I, but thee, alas ! I find
Far different from the maid I left behind :
I left thee gentle then, but see thee now unkind !
What can this mean ? Perchance the tongue
Of rival guile has done me wrong ;
And thou, too easy to deceive,
Against thy lover's truth could lying tales believe.
But would Irene give to these an ear ?
Irene, who so oft has prov'd my faith sincere—
Ah ! no—a rival's words despise,
And trust alone thy piercing eyes ;
They best can search my soul through all disguise.
By these my cause be tried ;
My features read, and then decide.

Ah ! who shall e'er this heart explore
Where all its secrets lie,
But she, whose eyes with sovereign power,
My inmost thoughts descry ?

She

She first, when love, by fear suppress'd,
 Scarce own'd the lover's name,
 Could only pierce Philenus' breast,
 Where glow'd the secret flame.

O ! ill advis'd ! for while my erring mind
 In others seeks the cause to find
 Of all my woes, in her alone
 The cause of all my woes is known.
 Not rigour now that bosom arms,
 But pride, alas ! of female charms.
 When last we parted, ripening time
 Had scarce matur'd her beauty's prime :
 Her care was then her conquests to maintain,
 And not perhaps the lowest of her train,
 To hold Philenus in her chain :
 Meantime her form more lovely grew,
 (Ill chance for me) and round her numerous
 lovers drew.

One calls her his delight, and THIS proclaims
 The fair his life, and THAT his Goddess names.
 In gentle murmurs one complains ;
 One pours his grief in dying strains :
 Her lips, that like the ruby glow,
 Some praise ; and some her breast of snow.
 A thousand cheeks grow pale before her glancing
 eye ;
 Her smile can make a thousand sigh :
 She feels her sway with secret joy,
 And while new schemes her thoughts employ
 On

On numbers still to increase her power,
Ah me! she scarce remembers poor Philenus more.

Still, fair Irene, call to mind
The faith to me you vow'd ;
Restore, O ! lov'd of all your kind,
The love you once bestow'd.

O ! Heaven, can life a comfort give ?
Can hope henceforth be mine ?
For whom, unhappy, shall I live,
If I your heart resign ?

FIRST LOVE.

ALAS ! 'tis true, the gentle flame
That warms the bosom first and gives the lover's
name,

Can ne'er with length of years expire,
Within still burns the smother'd fire :
But fearless while we danger court,
And with the sleeping embers sport,
A slender breath the sparks can raise,
Till from its ashes bursts the sudden blaze.

Ah ! let me but a moment view
My dear, my lovely foe,
I feel the former warmth anew
Within my bosom glow.

For her again I breathe my sighs,
For her my death implore ;
And ever in my fair-one's eyes
My destiny adore.

Not only in my Nyfa's sight I burn
For Nyfa's charms, but ah ! where'er I turn,
New fuel for the flame I find ;
And now I here recall to mind
How first she made my heart her slave ;
And there, how first to me she gave

Her

Her plighted faith. This place has known
To me, O ! Heaven ! her anger shown ;
And that has, in my happier thought,
Her kindness to remembrance brought.
That place presents a lively scene of strife ;
And this of peace, that sweetens life.
What more ? The nymphs, whom oft to sooth my
pains,
I seem'd to woo in amorous strains,
Even these remind me of the fair :
When Chloris' shape, or Sylvia's air,
Sometimes I praise, admire their grace
Of flowing locks or beauteous face ;
Oft as my lips, in flattery tell
How these, how those by turns excel,
My heart in whispers still replies :
“ But Nyfa, lovely Nyfa bears, from all, the
prize.”

Let her, who still unrivall'd reigns,
Who taught me first the pleasing pains,
My lasting homage take.
Whate'er I feel, no more I mourn,
Since blest'd is he, by fortune born
To fight for Nyfa's sake.

TIMID LOVE.

WHAT would'st thou, O! my heart? What
 power
 Has waken'd tumults there, unknown before?
 And now thou strugglest in my breast
 That scarce retains its panting guest,
 And now thou seem'st awhile compos'd to rest.
 Ah! heart, that feels such change by turns:
 It freezes now, and now it burns;
 And (stranger still) can often find
 At once th' effect of fire and frost combin'd!
 Is pain or pleasure thine? O! say,
 Does fear depress thee, or does courage
 sway?
 Ah! me, I now recall to mind the day
 When first incautious I receiv'd the flame,
 That from a piercing eye consumes my vital frame.

Ah! well I know my heart betray'd
 By beauty's powerful wiles,
 Laments itself a prisoner made
 To love's endearing smiles.

But ah! without a murmur still
 Be every pang suppress'd;
 Nor dare, though wretched, to reveal
 The affections of thy breast.

Then

Then must I ever languish, keep untold
My secret pains ?—No, Love befriends the bold.

To her my lips shall now disclose

The nymph for whom my passion glows :

I'll say those eyes at first inspir'd

My soul with love, and then to rashness fir'd:

The guilt was theirs ; yet nature's law allows

To plead compassion for our woes.

But should she thus my suit requite,

To drive me ever from her sight !——

Instruct me, Heaven ! I now would fain reveal

My secret love, and now as fain conceal.

Should'st thou, mild Zephyr, flutter nigh

The maid that rais'd my flame,

O ! call thy breath a lover's sigh,

But tell not whence it came.

Dear stream, if e'er thy waters glide

To grace my fair's abode,

O ! say a lover's eyes supplied

The tears to swell thy crystal tide,

But tell not whence they flow'd.

THE NEST OF LOVES.

ASK me thy beauties to admire,
Irene fair, thy fuit obtain :
From me the sighs of love require,
Irene fair thy fuit is vain.

Thy winning wiles to conquer hearts,
Thy charms from me may wonder claim;
But neither charms nor winning arts
For me can amorous shackles frame.

Blame me not, courteous nymph, if I decline
Thy proffer'd grace,
To accept a place
In such a heart as thine ;
Irene's heart, a fruitful nest that breeds
Innumerable Loves, where each to each succeeds.
One scarcely yet is pois'd upon his wings,
Swift-darting from the shell another springs,
While these, already born, the nurture give
To those who but begin to live ;
And these, ere long, their nurfplings find
In those who yet remain behind.
And now, with thickening press,
The numbers so increase,

Archytas

Archytas* would be pos'd to count the motley
crew ;

Their feathers all of various hue :
One spreads his violet, one his lily plumes ;
One takes a greyish hue ; vermillion one assumes ;
And some a dusky brown ; while some unfold
(Not always comeliest these) their wings of gold,
And these o'er all the rest dominion hold.

Their different humours they oppose,
Thoughtful and silent these ; frank and loquacious
those.

This face an open joy displays,
And that suspicious guile betrays.
One threatens loud ; one mildly greets ;
One roughly seizes ; one entreats :
A bow, by stealth, this from his fellow takes ;
A torch, or scarf, his prize another makes.

They now embrace, and now prepare,
For each in turn, some hidden snare.
They fear, they hate, but still their post main-
tain :

And canst thou think with such a train
To see me dwell :—Such thought is vain.
Deem not so ill my rest I prize,
With these to mingle, stunn'd with wrangling
cries,
And pinions fluttering round before my dazzled
eyes !

* An ancient mathematician.

Believe me, both a wiser choice may make :
Do thou a better inmate take ;
A home more calm let me secure :
While either keeps the point in view,
Which either wishes to pursue,
Thy nest do thou preserve, and I'll my peace
ensure.

In life, Irene, must I meet
A harder lot than thine ;
Thou sooner shalt thy hopes complete,
Than I succeed in mine.

Thou seekst from simple hearts to gain
A crowd of slaves to wear thy chain :
One constant I would woo.
Despair not thou the first to find,
For numerous are the simple kind—
But where's the maiden true ?

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

**RIGGS MEMORIAL
LIBRARY
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY**

